

Envision Carlsbad  
Existing Conditions and Issues Exploration



*Working Paper* **6**

**Small Town Feel, Beach Community  
Character and Connectedness;  
Neighborhood Revitalization,  
Community Design and Livability**

## Working Paper 1

Sustainability

## Working Paper 2

The Local Economy, Business Diversity and Tourism

## Working Paper 3

Open Space and the Natural Environment;  
Access to Recreation and Active, Healthy Lifestyles

## Working Paper 4

History, the Arts and Cultural Resources;  
High Quality Education and Community Services

## Working Paper 5

Walking, Biking, Public Transportation and Connectivity

## Working Paper 6

Small Town Feel, Beach Community Character and Connectedness;  
Neighborhood Revitalization, Community Design and Livability

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# 1 Introduction



## 1.1 Background and Purpose

In January 2010, the Carlsbad City Council adopted the Carlsbad Community Vision (Vision), representing the community's most important values, priorities and aspirations for the future. The community's vision guides the second phase of the Envision Carlsbad process, which entails an update of the city's General Plan, Local Coastal Program and Zoning Ordinance.

As the first task in this second phase of Envision Carlsbad, existing conditions and issues are evaluated. This evaluation is presented in six working papers, structured around the core values identified in the Carlsbad Community Vision. The working papers provide background information and technical analysis that will be useful for subsequent tasks. They also raise policy issues (presented at the end of each working paper) to help the Envision Carlsbad Citizens' Committee (EC<sup>3</sup>) brainstorm about conclusions and findings, in terms of how these may shape potential alternatives or policies. Importantly, these working papers are discussion tools, rather than final documents to be critiqued or refined. While the primary review and brainstorming group for the working papers will be the EC<sup>3</sup>, some papers will be appropriate for review and discussion by the city's various commissions and boards.

The six working papers are:

1. Sustainability
2. The Local Economy, Business Diversity and Tourism
3. Open Space and the Natural Environment; Access to Recreation and Active, Healthy Lifestyles
4. History, the Arts and Cultural Resources; High Quality Education and Community Services
5. Walking, Biking, Public Transportation and Connectivity
6. Small Town Feel, Beach Community Character and Connectedness; Neighborhood Revitalization, Community Design and Livability

## 1.2 This Working Paper

Working Paper #6 explores the following core values in more detail:

- *Enhance Carlsbad's defining attributes—its small town feel and beach community character. Build on the city's culture of civic engagement, volunteerism and philanthropy.*
- *Revitalize neighborhoods and enhance city-wide community design and livability. Promote a greater mix of uses citywide, with more activities along the coastline, and link density to public transportation. Revitalize the Village as a community focal point and a unique and memorable center for visitors, and rejuvenate the historic Barrio neighborhood.*

This paper weaves these core values with technical findings, supporting these qualitative objectives with analysis of land use and urban design factors. To better understand Carlsbad's physical and land use attributes and how they contribute to the community's overall identity, this working paper provides discussion of the existing land uses and highlights opportunity areas for future growth and optimal uses on these sites. Civic engagement, volunteerism, and philanthropy are discussed in terms

of physical planning, in the context of community members contributing to the revitalization of the community by actively participating in City policy and capital projects decisions and contributing time or other resources toward creating the community they envision.

This working paper presents data and analysis of opportunities and challenges for Envision Carlsbad, posing key land use and urban design questions for discussion purposes. The data and analysis within this paper will also help the EC<sup>3</sup> and city staff develop and design policies that will achieve a mix of land uses and strengthen the city's physical identity as a beach community. Following this introductory chapter, this paper is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 2 Land Use Context.** To understand current trends in development and what is on the ground today, Chapter 2 summarizes current land uses, as well as proposed and approved new development projects. Given that the city is largely built out to its boundaries, this chapter also identifies potential infill sites that may be suitable for addressing the community's future development needs.
- **Chapter 3 Small Town Feel, Beach Community Character and Connectedness.** Chapter 3 evaluates the community's character in terms of its physical form, infrastructure and urban design elements such as gateways, views and access. It also analyzes the historical evolution of the city's development pattern to study how to preserve and enhance the small town feel. Additionally, existing and potential connections to beaches and location of future waterfront destinations are explored.
- **Chapter 4 Neighborhood Revitalization, Community Design and Livability.** Chapter 4 expands on the potential infill sites identified in Chapter 2 by exploring types of uses most suitable for the physical shape and location of the site and the potential to enhance neighborhood identity. The sites are also studied for transit-oriented development opportunity and to maximize connection to amenities and services. The goal of this chapter is to explore sites and

developments that evoke the city's identity—its small town feel and beach community character—and contribute to its livability.

- **Chapter 5 Carlsbad Village Preservation and Revitalization.** Chapter 5 explores redevelopment opportunities in the Village as identified during the visioning process.
- **Chapter 6 Barrio Neighborhood Preservation and Revitalization.** Similar to the previous chapter, Chapter 6 uses the goals identified during the visioning process to enhance neighborhood identity and explore infill opportunities that will help revitalization of the Barrio.
- **Chapter 7 Planning Issues and Implications.** Finally, Chapter 7 highlights policy issues and questions for the EC<sup>3</sup> to consider.

# 2 Land Use Context



The use of land is a fundamental component of any general plan. Many aspects of the Carlsbad Community Vision will be implemented through the General Plan's land use policies. This chapter examines existing land use, development patterns and trends in the city. A comprehensive geographic information systems (GIS) database was developed to facilitate this analysis. Specific topics covered include the city's location within the region; the city's evolution since incorporation in 1952; the current mix of land uses and densities/intensities; existing plans in the city and in adjacent communities; recent development trends and projects; and an analysis of potential opportunity sites. Focus areas for potential future development are described more fully in Chapter 4.

## 2.1 City Location and Evolution

### Regional Location

Carlsbad today occupies approximately 42 square miles of rolling hills, beaches and bluffs along the northern coast of San Diego County. The city is located about 30 miles north of San Diego and about 90 miles south of Los Angeles. In addition to the Pacific Ocean coastline along its western boundary, Carlsbad is surrounded by the city of Oceanside to the north, the city of Encinitas to the south, and the cities of Vista and San Marcos and unincorporated areas of San Diego County to the east. Along Carlsbad's northern edge, urban development abuts Highway 78, with the highway and Buena Vista Lagoon acting as a boundary between Carlsbad and Oceanside. Similarly, Batiquitos Lagoon along the city's southern edge acts as a boundary between Carlsbad and Encinitas. To the east, city boundaries

are less clear, as a mix of hillsides and urban development are located adjacent to the cities of Vista and San Marcos and unincorporated county lands. The city's regional location is depicted in

### City Evolution

From the city's incorporation in 1952 and for many years after, Carlsbad existed as a "quaint village-by-the-sea."<sup>1</sup> In 1952, the city consisted of about 7.5 square miles centered on the Village. Figure 2-2 shows that over time a series of annexations gradually expanded the city's land area south and east to its current size of 42.8 square miles. The Village, once the heart of the community, is now at the city's northwest corner, almost a 10-mile drive from the city's southeastern edge

## 2.2 Land Use Pattern

The following section describes the range of existing land uses in the city and the character of development. It also examines a jobs/employed residents ratio to examine the balance between jobs and housing.

### Existing Uses

A major category of land use in Carlsbad is single-family residential, with such neighborhoods distributed throughout the city. All types of residential uses account for 31 percent of the city's land area (exclusive of local streets), as shown in Table 2-1, with the largest share attributed to single-family homes. According to SANDAG (2009), there are

<sup>1</sup> City of Carlsbad, General Plan 1994.

43,496 residential units in the city, which consist of 29,390 single-family homes (68 percent of total), 12,807 multi-family units (29 percent of total) and 1,299 mobile homes (3 percent of total).

Non-residential uses, including commercial, industrial and hotels, account for ten percent of the city’s land area. Commercial and industrial uses are concentrated along Palomar Airport Road. As shown in Table 2-2, and according to Colliers International (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2010), there are 14.9 million square feet of industrial and research & development/flex space and 5.6 million square feet of office space. Notably, as of mid-2010, vacancy rates were relatively high at 14.6 percent (industrial) and 29.3 percent (research & development/flex space). Hotels, which comprise one percent of Carlsbad’s land area, are scattered throughout the city, taking advantage of freeway access, the airport and proximity to major activity and employment centers, including Legoland, beaches, golf courses, the Village and business parks. Public and quasi-public uses, including city buildings and utilities, account for six percent of the city’s total acreage.

Although the coastal portions of Carlsbad are largely developed, natural vegetation remains in and around the three coastal lagoons and on some of the higher, steeper-sloped, inland portions of the city. Ten percent of the city’s land area is used for parks and recreation, four percent for agriculture and 29 percent as other open space or natural areas. Finally, the remaining ten percent of land is undeveloped or vacant. While some of the vacant land may be available for development, some sections may not be developable due to site constraints, such as steep slopes or natural habitat that is protected pursuant to the city’s Habitat Management Plan.

As the city continues to grow in terms of housing and employment uses, public and commercial services and uses will need to expand concurrently. Working Paper #2 explored current and expected trends in population and employment patterns, which help project demand for future land uses. These are summarized and compared to land availability in Section 2.5 of this paper.

**TABLE 2-1: EXISTING LAND USE**

| LAND USE                                 | ACRES         | SHARE OF TOTAL |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Residential</b>                       | <b>6,796</b>  | <b>31%</b>     |
| Rural Residential                        | 87            | <1%            |
| Single Family Detached Residential       | 5,084         | 23%            |
| Single Family Attached Residential       | 646           | 3%             |
| Mobile Homes                             | 180           | 1%             |
| Multi-Family Residential                 | 800           | 4%             |
| <b>Commercial/Industrial</b>             | <b>2,104</b>  | <b>10%</b>     |
| Shopping Centers                         | 131           | 1%             |
| Hotel, Motel, Resort                     | 223           | 1%             |
| Commercial                               | 326           | 1%             |
| Office                                   | 270           | 1%             |
| Industrial                               | 1,154         | 5%             |
| <b>Public/Quasi-Public</b>               | <b>1,416</b>  | <b>6%</b>      |
| Transportation, Communication, Utilities | 930           | 4%             |
| Education/Institutional                  | 485           | 2%             |
| <b>Open Space/Agriculture</b>            | <b>9,252</b>  | <b>42%</b>     |
| Agriculture                              | 935           | 4%             |
| Recreation                               | 2,074         | 10%            |
| Other Open Space                         | 6,243         | 29%            |
| Undeveloped/Vacant                       | 2,218         | 10%            |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                          | <b>21,786</b> | <b>100%</b>    |
| Rights of Way                            | 3,223         |                |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                       | <b>25,009</b> |                |

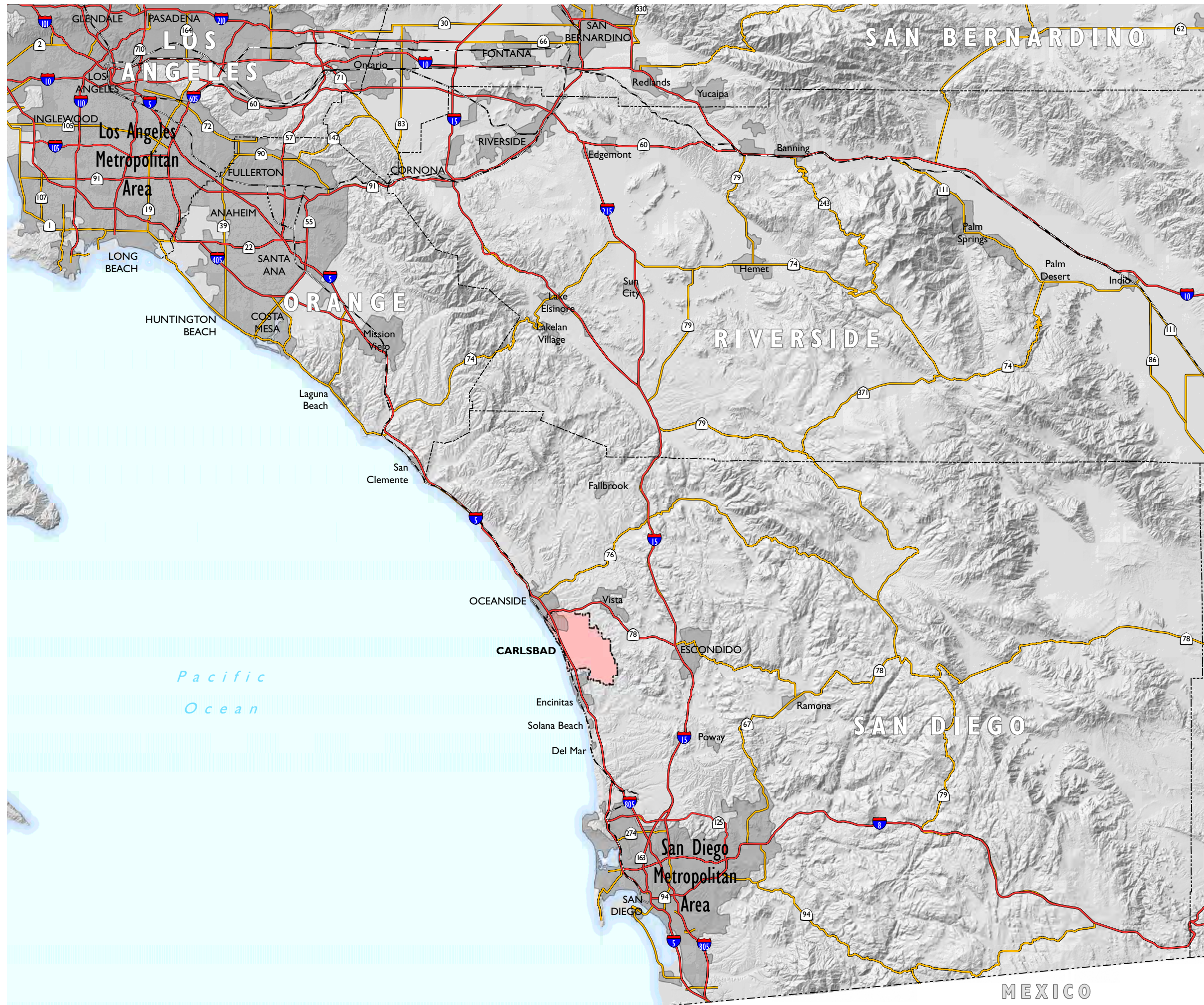
**TABLE 2-2: EXISTING INVENTORY OF RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL USES**



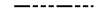



|   | UNITS/SQUARE FEET | VACANCY RATE (%) |
|---|-------------------|------------------|
| <b>Residential (Units)</b>              | <b>43,496</b>     | <b>8.0</b>       |
| Single-Family                           | 29,390            | 7.1              |
| Multi-Family                            | 12,807            | 9.8              |
| Mobile Homes                            | 1,299             | 9.9              |
| <b>Non-Residential (SF/hotel rooms)</b> | <b>24,373,378</b> |                  |
| Industrial & R&D/<br>Flex Inventory     | 14,910,072        | 14.6             |
| Office-Inventory                        | 5,622,715         | 29.3             |
| Retail                                  | 3,840,591         | 4.7              |
| Hotel Rooms                             | 3,582             | n/a              |

Source: Residential: SANDAG, 2008; Non-Residential: Colliers International (Q2 2010) and City of Carlsbad Planning Department.



Figure 2-1: Regional Setting



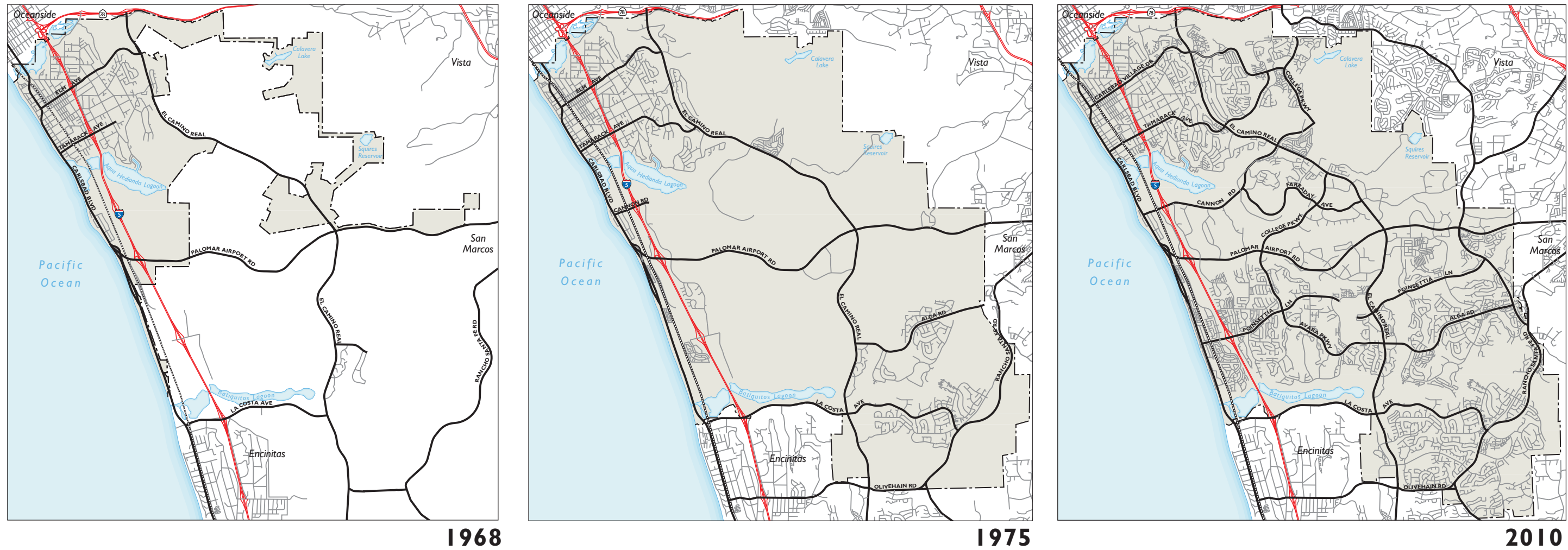
-  Carlsbad City Limits
-  Urban Areas\*
-  County Lines
-  Interstates
-  Highways & Major Roads
-  Passenger Rail Lines

\*The urban areas data provided by ESRI does not depict city limits. Its purpose is to show the general areas of higher population and should be regarded as an illustrative feature on the map.

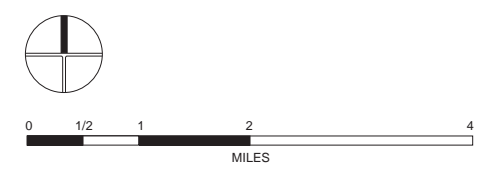


Source: ESRI, 2009; City of Carlsbad, 2009; SANDAG, 2008; USGS, 2002; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.





 Carlsbad City Limits



Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Quads, *San Luis Rey*, *San Marcos*, *Encinitas*, *Rancho Santa Fe*, 1968, 1975; City of Carlsbad, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2010.







## Jobs-Housing Balance

Jobs-housing balance refers to the condition in which a single community offers an equal supply of jobs and housing in order to reduce the need for people to commute in or out of town for work. Like most urban structure variables, it is a necessary but not sufficient condition for reducing the need to travel. In reality, the match of education, skills and interests is not always accommodated within the boundaries of one community. Still, jobs-housing balance can offer a rough sense of whether land uses in a community are likely to encourage or discourage commute travel. To measure jobs-housing balance, one typically looks not at housing units but at employed residents. A jobs to employed residents ratio of 1.0 would indicate equality between jobs and housing, although because of regional interdependencies, the need to commute outside the city will still result. In the case of Carlsbad, the jobs/employed residents ratio of 1.4<sup>2</sup> indicates that there are more jobs than employed residents. This reflects the city's stature as an employment center in North County as well as housing that is more expensive than in inland communities. Employees who work in Carlsbad may not be able to afford to rent or own housing in Carlsbad and therefore seek housing in less expensive communities.

## Densities and Intensities

Density is the number of people or housing units in a given area, and intensity is measured as the amount of floor space in a given area. Density and intensity of development have implications in terms of community character as well as traffic and public facility impacts. It is a fundamental topic for land use planning, especially in a community that has limited available land and wants to preserve remaining open spaces.

Residential density is usually measured in housing units per acre, while intensity of non-residential development is measured by floor area ratio (FAR). The FAR measurement describes the ratio of building space to lot size. Thus, a two-story building covering all of a parcel will result in a FAR of 2.0 and likewise for a four-story building covering half the parcel.

Existing residential densities and intensities are mapped in Figure 2-4, with the lightest shades representing lower densities. Most noticeably, the majority of the land area is covered by low density and intensity uses. Over 90 percent of residential uses are built at densities of less than eight units per acre. Similarly, nearly 98 percent of non-residential uses have FAR values of less than 0.2. The general low intensity of many office and hotel developments in Carlsbad in part reflects the large amount of parking and, in some cases, landscaping surrounding buildings. Even though buildings may be two to three stories in height, FAR values are low due to overall large sites. With the exception of the Village, which has higher densities/intensities, there are very few sites in the highest density categories: 15+ units per acre for residential and 0.5+ FAR for non-residential uses. Even these densities/intensities are modest compared to most California cities.

As Carlsbad looks ahead to a future where new development will result largely from reuse of existing sites rather than outward growth, issues of appropriate density and intensity will be paramount to ensure efficient use of land, compatibility between old and new development and the ability to take advantage of locations that are proximate to transit, services and amenities.

<sup>2</sup> SANDAG. 2050 Growth Projections. "2008 Jobs/Housing Ratio" Carlsbad and San Diego County.



*Single-family homes represent the primary housing type in Carlsbad, although the number of multi-family units have increased substantially over the past ten years.*



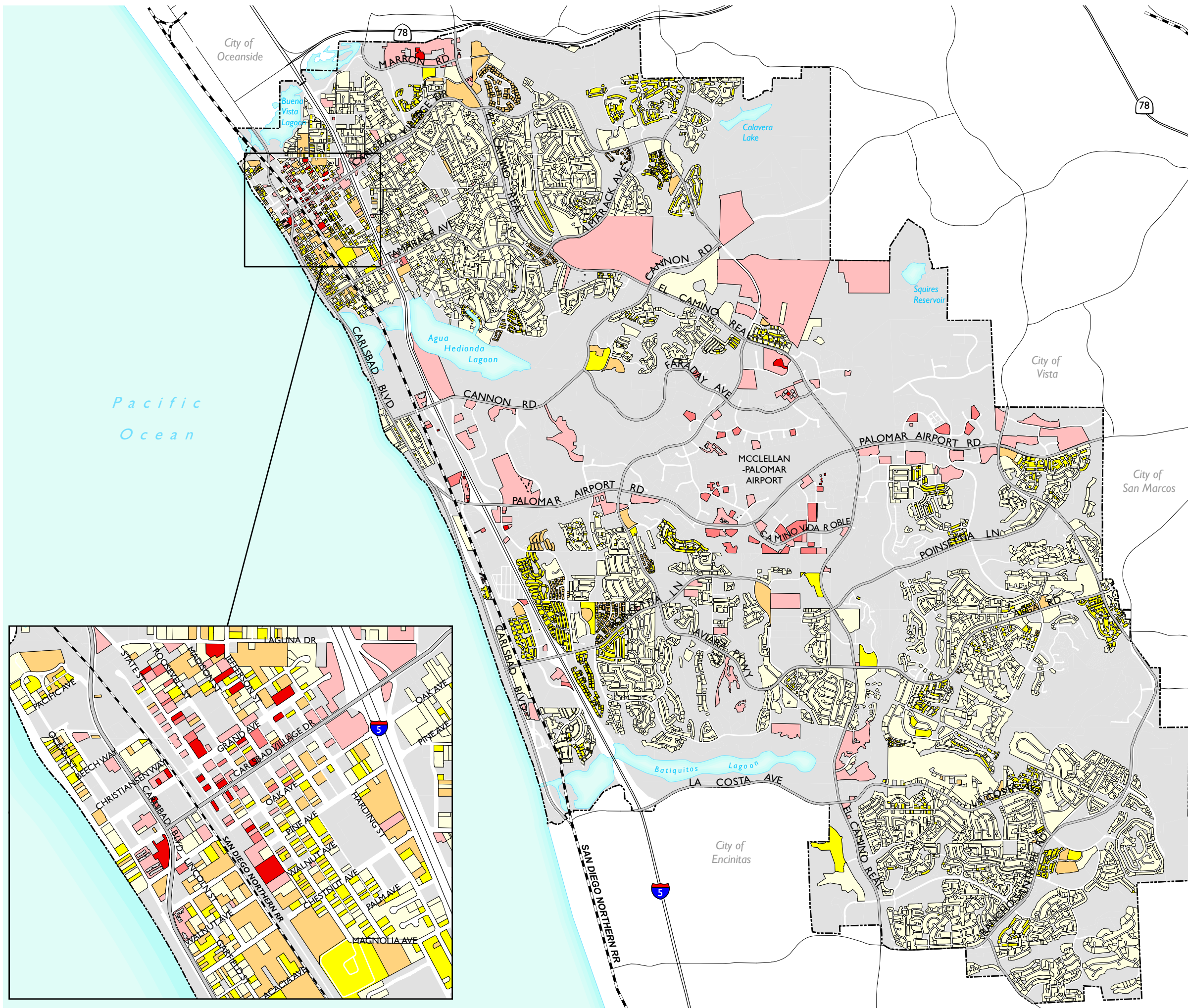
*Retail buildings range from small shops and restaurants to larger shopping centers. New office buildings and employment campuses have accommodated an expanding office and technology sector.*



*Public facilities, parks and recreation facilities compose a substantial portion of the city's land area and contribute to the city's small-town beach community character.*



Figure 2-4: Existing Densities and Intensities



Density (Residential Uses)

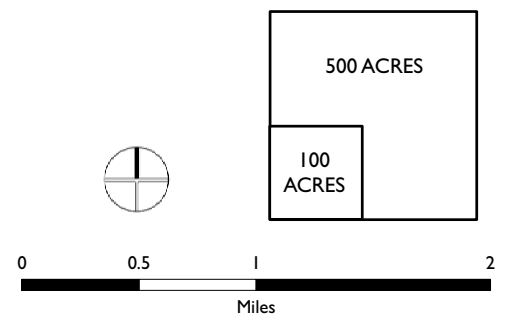
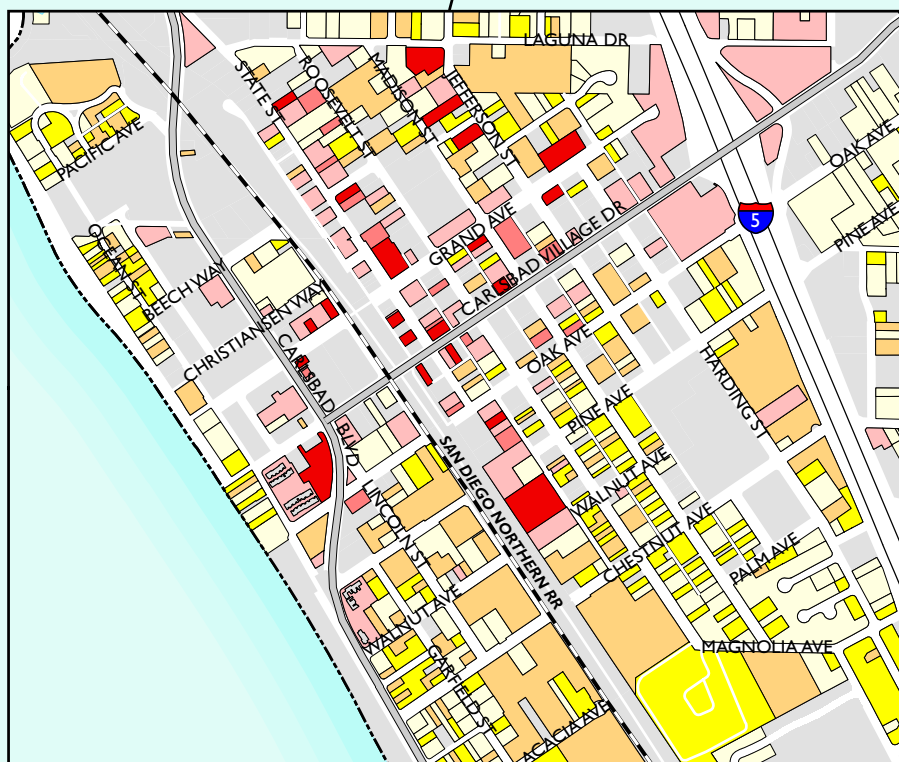
- 0 - 8 units/acre
- 8 - 15 units/acre
- 15+ units/acre

Intensity (Commercial, Industrial, Agriculture Uses)

- 0.0 - 0.20 Floor Area Ratio
- 0.20 - 0.50 Floor Area Ratio
- 0.50+ Floor Area Ratio

Notes: (1) Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is the ratio of total building floor area to lot area.  
(2) Parks, open space, and public uses are excluded from this map.

- Highways
- Major Roads
- Railroad
- City Limits



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2009; SANDAG, 2008; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.



## 2.3 Existing Plans and Development Context

Along with the Community Vision expressed during Phase I of the Envision Carlsbad process, existing policy and regulatory documents are important reference points for this process. The land use and design policies of these plans reflect past and present expectations of the community for development and public improvement. Furthermore, understanding of local, regional and neighboring jurisdictions' goals provide context for the General Plan update and how the city fits in with the region as a whole.

### Carlsbad Plans

#### 1994 General Plan

The current General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1994, though individual elements have been amended at various times since then. The General Plan contains the seven required elements, as well as a Parks and Recreation Element and an Arts Element. Goals, objectives and implementing policies and programs are provided for each element. The current General Plan land use designations paint a picture similar to what is on the ground: neighborhoods of low density residential homes and open space, the community bisected by the planned industrial area around the airport and commercial uses along I-5, Palomar Airport Road, in the Village and in pockets along El Camino Real and Rancho Santa Fe Road. Higher density residential areas are designated near the Village but also in dispersed locations throughout the city.

#### 2009 Housing Element

Adopted in 2009, and certified by the State in 2010, the City's most recent Housing Element describes a range of policies and programs to accommodate housing demand at all income levels. According to the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), Carlsbad is responsible for accommodating 8,376 housing units during the planning period (through 2010), including 4,965 units at below market rates (affordable to moderate, low, and very low income households). Recent development projects have

satisfied a portion of this below market rate housing: 1,399 units. The Housing Element accommodates the remaining need through vacant and underutilized sites, such as the Village Area, the Barrio neighborhood, Plaza Camino Real, South Coast Materials Quarry reclamation area, and other sites scattered throughout the city. The Barrio is identified as ideally located next to major transportation, shopping and recreation, but with a substantial number of older, underutilized properties with high absentee ownership, that may be appropriate for redevelopment. The Housing Element also describes many properties in the Village as having potential to redevelop with a mix of uses, including affordable housing.

#### Specific and Master Plans

The city uses specific plans and master plans extensively to coordinate development and infrastructure improvements on large sites or series of parcels. Specific plans and master plans must be consistent with the general plan, and are typically used to establish development plans and standards to achieve the design and development objectives for a particular area. Figure 2-5 illustrates the amount of land in Carlsbad that is subject to a specific plan or master plan. Much of the residential areas in the southern and northeastern portions of the Carlsbad were developed as part of a master plan (e.g., Aviara, Bressi Ranch, Calavera Hills, Rancho Carrillo, Robertson Ranch, and Villages of La Costa). In addition to the large residential master plan areas, the city has several smaller residential specific plans and specific plans for commercial and industrial areas. The Village Master Plan was just amended in 2007 and will continue to guide development in that area (see Chapter 5 for details on this plan). However, there are also many older specific plans and master plans that have been fully implemented. These older/implemented plans will be evaluated during the update process (Task 7) to determine whether or not they can be retired.

#### Growth Management

In 1986, Proposition E was passed by the voters, which limits the total number of dwelling units in the city to 54,600 and requires public facilities

be provided concurrent with the need for those facilities.. To implement Proposition E, the city adopted a Growth Management Ordinance, as well as a Citywide Facilities and Improvement Plan, which specifies levels of service for a variety of public facilities and improvements including city administrative facilities, circulation, drainage, fire protection, libraries, open space, parks, schools, sewer collection, wastewater treatment and water distribution.

### Adjacent City and County Land Use Plans

Given Carlsbad's location—surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and several neighboring communities—understanding the local context and coordinating planning efforts, are essential parts of the General Plan update process. As mentioned above, Carlsbad is situated in San Diego County and is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, Oceanside to the north, Vista to the northeast, San Marcos and some areas of San Diego County to the east, and Encinitas to the South.

#### City of Oceanside General Plan

Carlsbad's northern boundary with the City of Oceanside extends along Buena Vista Lagoon and Highway 78, to a commercial development at the intersection of Highway 78 and College Boulevard. The boundary continues east between residential areas and abuts commercial and residential development in Oceanside. Oceanside's General Plan designates the area immediately surrounding Buena Vista Lagoon as open space and most of the area north of the Lagoon and west of I-5 as residential, with commercial uses along South Coast Highway. East of the Lagoon to El Camino Real contains areas designated for special commercial uses with large commercial retailers. The border to the northeast divides planned communities designated for residential estates in Oceanside and open space areas in Carlsbad.

#### City of Vista General Plan

Carlsbad shares a boundary with the City of Vista to the northeast along the planned residential communities that branch from Shadowridge Drive (Redwood Crest, Sequoia Crest), south through open space, and then along the residential and light industrial developments south along South Melrose Drive and east along Lionshead Avenue. The Vista General Plan is currently being updated.

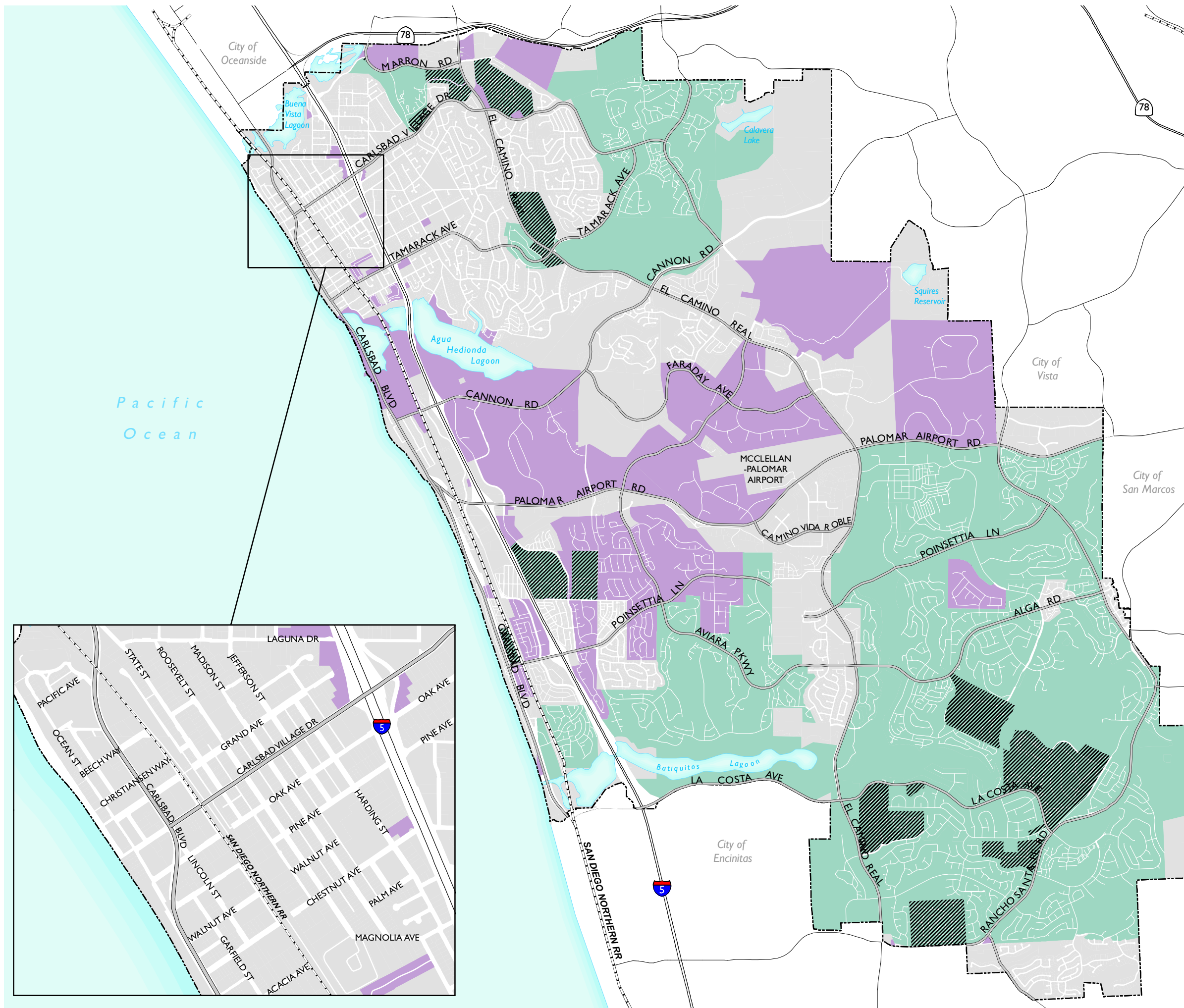
#### City of San Marcos General Plan

The boundary between Carlsbad and San Marcos proceeds from the Carlsbad-Vista boundary at Palomar Airport Road south between residential areas along Melrose Drive to the west and Rancho Santa Fe Road to the east. The boundary is interrupted by a section of San Diego County land between Melrose Drive and Rancho Santa Fe Road. The San Marcos General Plan designates this area for the Rancho Dorado Specific Plan and residential uses. The Carlsbad-San Marcos Boundary continues south of the County boundary from the intersection of Rancho Santa Fe Road and Patton Street along Rancho Santa Fe Road, past San Elijo Road to another boundary with the County. The area northeast of the intersection is designated for light industrial; from the southeast corner of the intersection, the San Marcos General Plan designates areas for residential uses. The San Marcos General Plan is currently being updated.

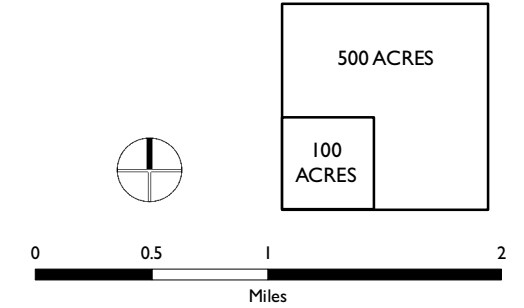
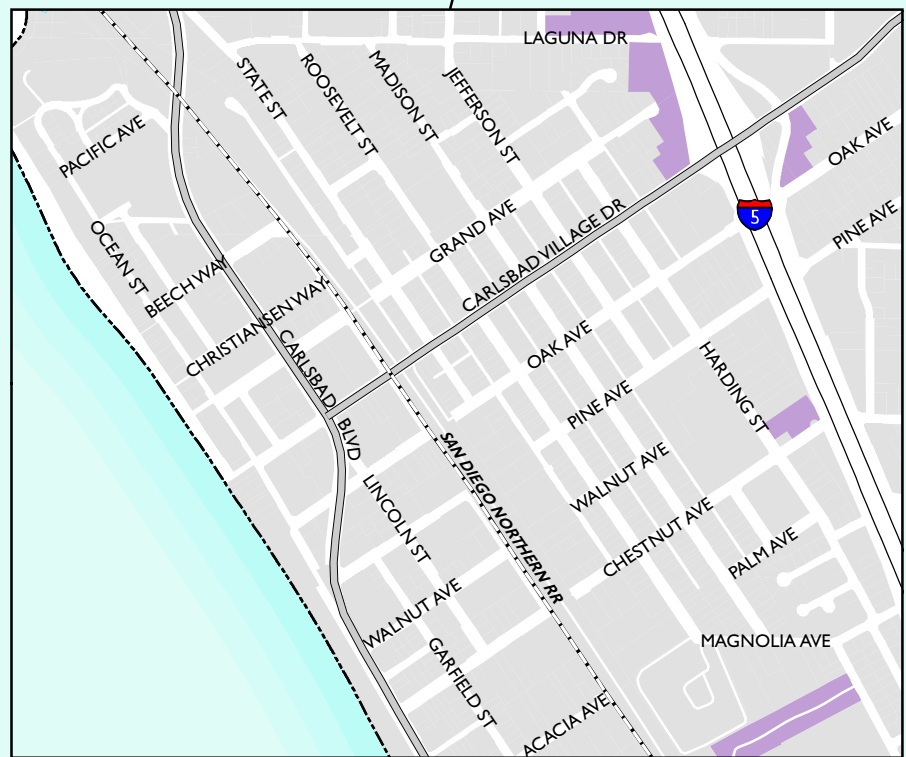
#### City of Encinitas General Plan

Carlsbad shares its southern boundary with the city of Encinitas – beginning at the Pacific Ocean and continuing east along Batiquitos Lagoon and La Costa Avenue to approximately 400 feet west of El Camino Real; the boundary then extends south to Leucadia Boulevard where the Forum retail center in Carlsbad is adjacent to commercial development in Encinitas at the intersection of El Camino Real and Leucadia Boulevard. The city boundary then continues generally east between residential neighborhoods in Carlsbad's southeast area (La Costa) and residential neighborhoods in Encinitas (Olivenhain community).

Figure 2-5: Master Plans and Specific Plans



- Specific Plan Area
- Master Plan Area
- Areas of Overlap between Specific Plans and Master Plans.
- Highways
- Major Roads
- Railroad
- City Limits



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2011; SANDAG, 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.



The Encinitas General Plan identifies goals for the area south of Batiquitos Lagoon (Leucadia community) as preserving single family areas and improving the existing commercial corridor along Highway 101, though the lagoon provides a buffer between these uses and Carlsbad. Encinitas' plan also calls for coastal erosion prevention and sand replenishment programs along the beach, which connects to Carlsbad, and strict development and grading controls to prevent sedimentation in Batiquitos Lagoon.

The majority of the southeastern portion of Carlsbad's shared boundary with Encinitas is adjacent to the New Encinitas and Olivenhain communities in Encinitas, which are developed as planned residential communities except for the large retail commercial development along El Camino Real near the intersection with Leucadia Boulevard. The Encinitas General Plan proposes no substantial changes in development patterns or densities for New Encinitas. The plan notes significant traffic congestion around the commercial developments, suggesting better connection between retail establishments. The Olivenhain community, roughly east of Rancho Santa Fe Road aims to preserve a rural atmosphere with large lots and open space. The Encinitas General Plan is also currently being updated.

### San Diego County General Plan

The City of Carlsbad borders two sections of the county of San Diego on the city's eastern edge. The northern of the two sections begins at Melrose Drive and Rancho Santa Fe Road and continues north along Melrose Drive to the Carlsbad-San Marcos boundary. The 2009 San Diego County General Plan designates this area for low-density residential uses similar to its neighboring uses in Carlsbad and San Marcos.

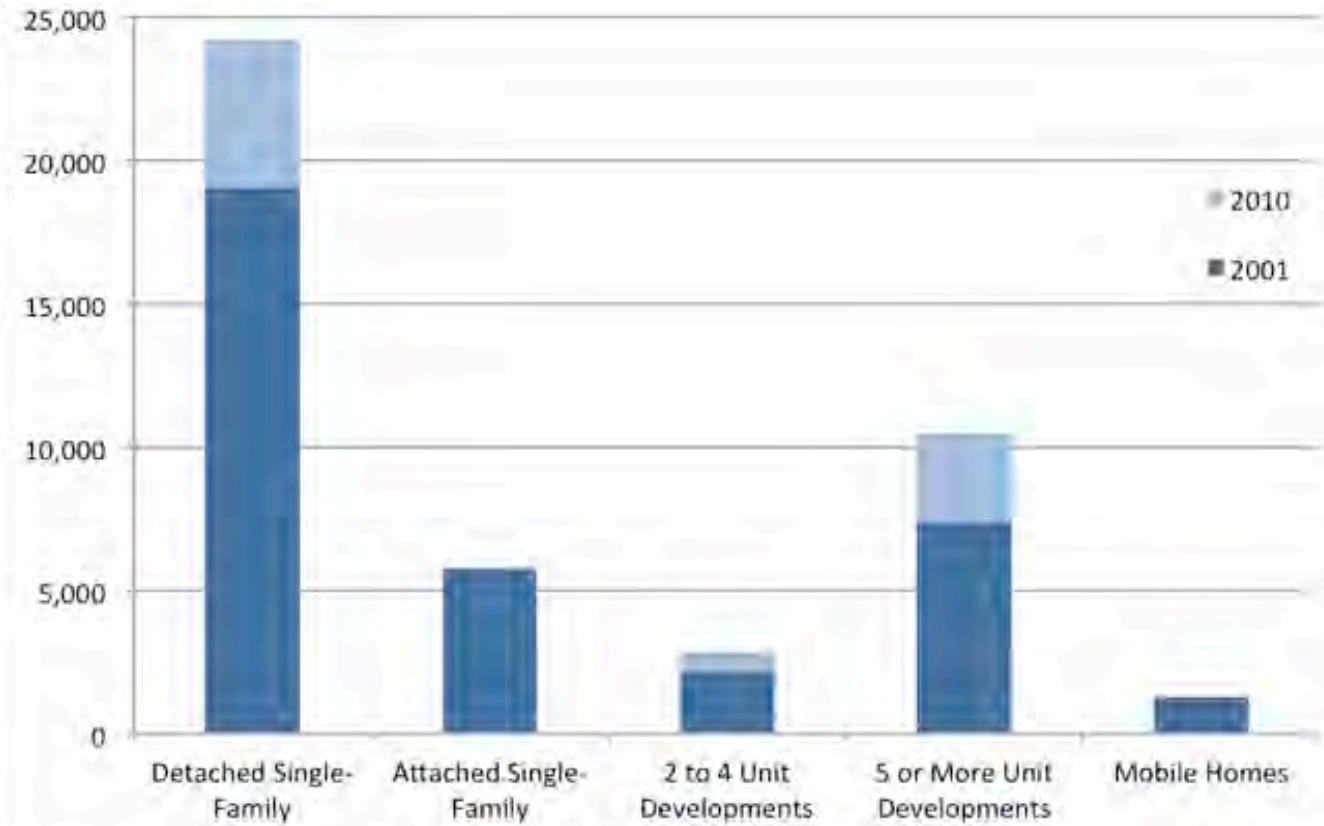
## 2.4 Major Development Projects and Trends

Although the recent national economic crisis has impacted Carlsbad in terms of increased home foreclosure rates and a tightened lending market, the city has been relatively resilient to these effects. As described in Working Paper #2, while taxable sales, property values and hotel occupancies have slumped in Carlsbad, the local economy and employment base are steadfast and are anticipated to experience renewed growth in the near-term. Many of the strengths and past successes of Carlsbad's local economy (not only tourism, but the ability to attract other kinds of employers too) can be credited to its defining attributes of "small town feel, beach community character and connectedness," as characterized in the Community Vision.

### Recent Trends

Since the last General Plan update (1994), the city has undergone substantial change in the composition of its land use and building types. In the last ten years, over 9,000 housing units have been added to the city's housing stock (a 25 percent increase). While more than half of these units were single-family homes, the greatest percent increase in units (43 percent since 2001) were multi-family dwellings with five or more units, as illustrated in Chart 2-1. Several new master plan residential communities have been constructed during this period, including Bressi Ranch, Villages of La Costa, Calavera Hills Phase 2, and the first phase of Robertson Ranch is under construction. These communities include single-family and multi-family residences, open space areas, children's play areas, schools, community facilities, and some include office and retail uses.

CHART 3-1: TEN-YEAR CHANGE IN HOUSING TYPES, 2001 TO 2010



Source: California Department of Finance, 2001 and 2010.



## WP6: Small Town Feel, Beach Community Character and Connectedness; Neighborhood Revitalization, Community Design and Livability

Commercial and employment sectors have also undergone transformation in recent years. The city developed a high-tech employment sector beginning in the mid-1980s and earned recognition as a golf equipment development center in the mid-1990s. Several biotechnology, green technology and telecommunications firms have located in the city, furthering Carlsbad's reputation as a regional leader in high-tech industries. In addition, the development of mid-range hotels, high-end resorts, spas, and other leisure attractions (most prominently Legoland) has expanded tourism considerably over the last 15 years. As specified in Working Paper #2, development of these uses has continued even through the recent economic depression, with demand for new office, manufacturing and flex spaces (combination office/manufacturing/warehouse) projected to increase.

### Development Projects

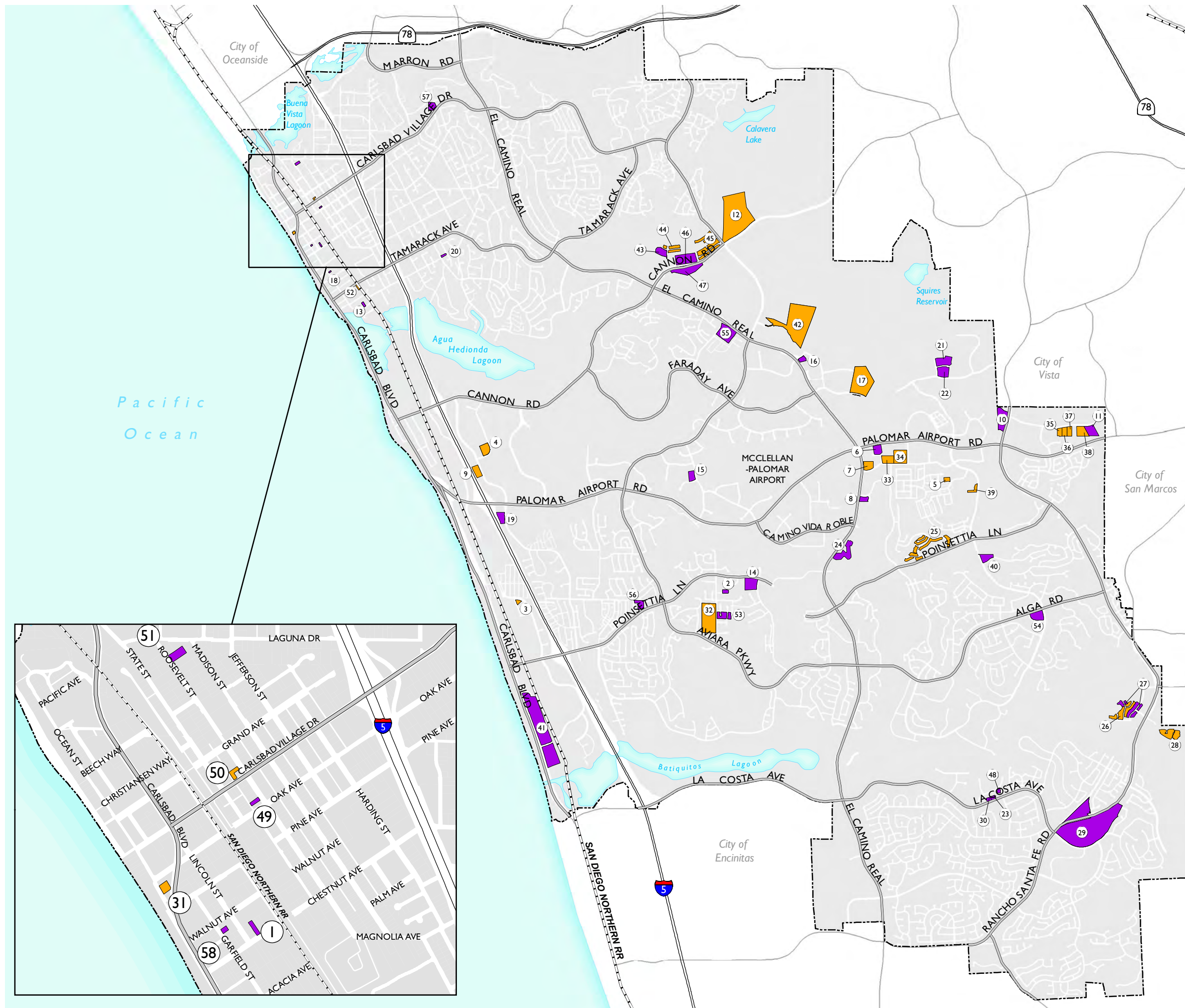
There are several development projects in the pipeline that may be constructed in the near term. The majority of these projects are residential, including large-scale developments, such as the approved Robertson Ranch Master Plan, with housing, commercial space and substantial open space, and the proposed Dos Colinas senior community and multi-family housing development. Development projects are summarized in Table 2-3 and illustrated on Figure 2-6. These projects alone could add over 1,000 housing units, 250 hotel rooms, 294,000 square feet of office, 433,000 square feet of public/institutional, 823,000 square feet of industrial, 380,000 square feet of retail development to the city.

| TABLE 2-3: DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS |                                  |             |             |                 |                        |               |                 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| MAP ID NO.                      | PROJECT NAME                     | OFFICE (SF) | PUBLIC (SF) | INDUSTRIAL (SF) | COMMERCIAL/RETAIL (SF) | HOTEL (ROOMS) | HOUSING (UNITS) |
| 1                               | 330 Chestnut Avenue Condos       |             |             |                 |                        |               | 5               |
| 2                               | Aviara Black Rail Road           |             |             |                 |                        |               | 16              |
| 3                               | Bluewater Crossing Building 1    |             |             |                 |                        |               | 78              |
| 4                               | Bob Baker Jeep Addition          | 801         |             |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 5                               | Boys & Girls Club                |             | 18,256      |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 6                               | Bressi Ranch Lot 15              |             |             | 40,000          |                        |               |                 |
| 7                               | Bressi Ranch Lots 10-13          |             |             | 143,000         |                        |               |                 |
| 8                               | Bressi Ranch Medical Plaza       | 19,760      |             |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 9                               | Carlsbad Paseo                   |             |             |                 | 51,902                 |               |                 |
| 10                              | Carlsbad Raceway Lots 1-4        |             |             | 179,945         |                        |               |                 |
| 11                              | Carlsbad Raceway Lots 13-15      |             |             | 140,400         |                        |               |                 |
| 12                              | Carlsbad Unified School District |             | 184,908     |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 13                              | Date Bluff Beach Homes           |             |             |                 |                        |               | 3               |
| 14                              | Daybreak Community Addition      |             | 6,188       |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 15                              | Durkin Family Trust              | 30,000      |             |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 16                              | El Camino Terrace                | 18,000      |             |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 17                              | First Responders Training Center |             | 51,697      |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 18                              | Garfield Street Apartments       |             |             |                 |                        |               | 3               |
| 19                              | Green Dragon Colonial            |             |             |                 | 21,281                 |               |                 |
| 20                              | Highland James                   |             |             |                 |                        |               | 5               |
| 21                              | Kilroy Lot 4                     | 53,160      |             |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 22                              | Kilroy Lot 5                     | 50,850      |             |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 23                              | La Costa Canyon Views            |             |             |                 |                        |               | 8               |
| 24                              | La Costa Greens 1.3              |             |             |                 |                        |               | 4               |

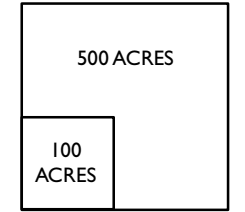
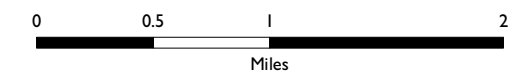
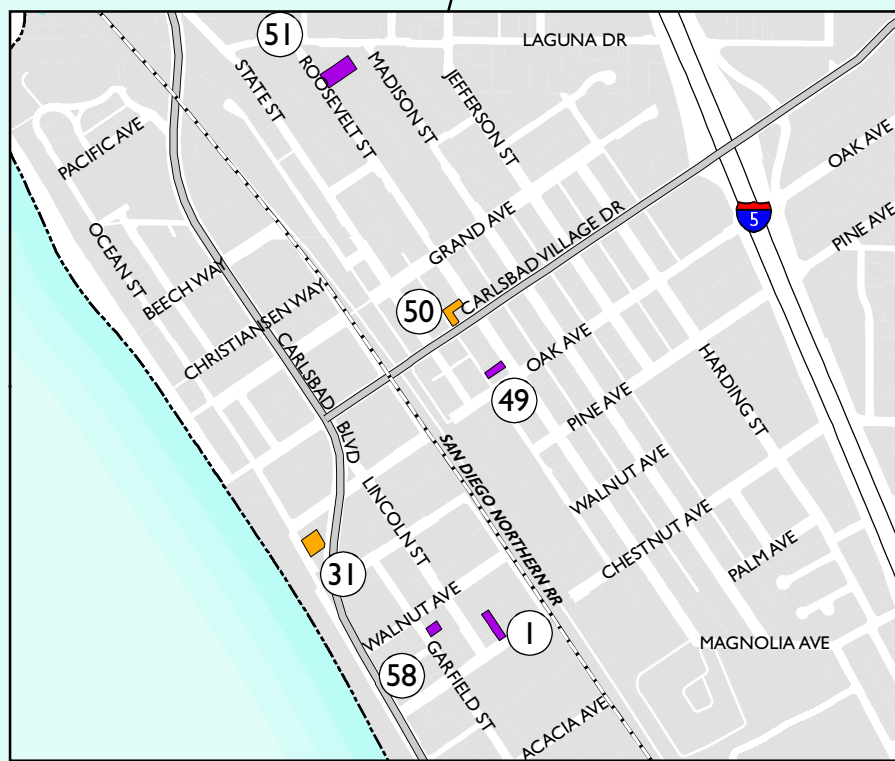
| TABLE 2-3: DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS |                                |                |                |                 |                        |               |                 |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| MAP ID NO.                      | PROJECT NAME                   | OFFICE (SF)    | PUBLIC (SF)    | INDUSTRIAL (SF) | COMMERCIAL/RETAIL (SF) | HOTEL (ROOMS) | HOUSING (UNITS) |
| 25                              | La Costa Greens 1.7 And 1.4    |                |                |                 |                        |               | 71              |
| 26                              | La Costa Oaks No 3.3           |                |                |                 |                        |               | 120             |
| 27                              | La Costa Oaks No 3.4           |                |                |                 |                        |               | 83              |
| 28                              | La Costa Oaks No 3.7           |                |                |                 |                        |               | 43              |
| 29                              | La Costa Town Square           | 55,000         |                |                 | 284,000                |               | 111             |
| 30                              | La Costa Views                 |                |                |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 31                              | Lumiere Carlsbad Village Hotel |                |                |                 |                        | 39            |                 |
| 32                              | Muroya Subdivision             |                |                |                 |                        |               | 37              |
| 33                              | Ocean Collection Lots 17-18    |                |                | 51,286          |                        |               |                 |
| 34                              | Ocean Collection Lots 19-22    |                |                | 108,624         |                        |               |                 |
| 35                              | Opus Point Lot 7               |                |                | 23,109          |                        |               |                 |
| 36                              | Opus Point Lot 8               |                |                | 26,054          |                        |               |                 |
| 37                              | Opus Point Lots 9-10           |                |                | 46,441          |                        |               |                 |
| 38                              | Opus Point Lot 11              |                |                | 64,327          |                        |               |                 |
| 39                              | Pacific Ridge School Expansion |                | 124,721        |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 40                              | Palomar Korean Church          |                | 27,000         |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 41                              | Ponto Beachfront Village       |                |                |                 | 20,585                 | 215           |                 |
| 42                              | Rancho Milagro                 |                |                |                 |                        |               | 14              |
| 43                              | Robertson Ranch Pa 14          |                |                |                 |                        |               | 16              |
| 44                              | Robertson Ranch Pa 16          |                |                |                 |                        |               | 85              |
| 45                              | Robertson Ranch Pa 18          |                |                |                 |                        |               | 110             |
| 46                              | Robertson Ranch Pa 21          |                |                |                 |                        |               | 84              |
| 47                              | Robertson Ranch Pa 22          | 66,000         |                |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 48                              | Romeria Pointe Condos          |                |                |                 |                        |               | 9               |
| 49                              | Roosevelt And Oak Mixed Use    |                |                |                 | 2,411                  |               | 6               |
| 50                              | Roosevelt Center               |                |                |                 |                        |               | 10              |
| 51                              | Roosevelt Garden Condos        |                |                |                 |                        |               | 14              |
| 52                              | Seabreeze Condos               |                |                |                 |                        |               | 12              |
| 53                              | Shorelight Point               |                |                |                 |                        |               | 16              |
| 54                              | St Elizabeth Seton Church Add. |                | 20,000         |                 |                        |               |                 |
| 55                              | Tabata 10                      |                |                |                 |                        |               | 26              |
| 56                              | Tabata Ranch                   |                |                |                 |                        |               | 5               |
| 57                              | Trails End                     |                |                |                 |                        |               | 7               |
| 58                              | Walnut Avenue Condominiums     |                |                |                 |                        |               | 15              |
| <b>Total</b>                    |                                | <b>293,571</b> | <b>432,770</b> | <b>823,186</b>  | <b>380,179</b>         | <b>254</b>    | <b>1,007</b>    |

Source: City of Carlsbad, 2011.

Working Paper 6  
**Figure 2-6: Development Projects**



- Approved
- Under Construction
- Highways
- Major Roads
- Railroad
- City Limits



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2011; SANDAG, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.



## 2.5 Opportunity Sites

As one of the city's core values, neighborhood revitalization aims to promote a greater mix of uses citywide and more activities along the coastline, in order to enhance overall community design, interaction and livability. With the city nearing "built out" and the preservation of open space a priority, undeveloped land available for development is limited. The city has few vacant sites remaining. The land use distribution in Chapter 2 identified 2,202 acres of undeveloped or vacant land, representing ten percent of the total land area. However, many of these sites are small, irregular in shape, or otherwise constrained due to natural or physical features that render development infeasible. Therefore, much of the city's future development will come from expanded development on sites with existing structures or redevelopment of sites and structures that come to the end of their useful life over the next 20 years.

As a result of this analysis, potential opportunity sites are identified in the Village and greater downtown area, along the city's major corridors and in vacant sites within existing communities, as shown in Figure 2-7. In total, the analysis identifies 2,332 acres with the potential for full or partial development or redevelopment. This section documents the methodology for selecting these "opportunity" sites, and presents potential constraints on these sites due to environmental features or other physical or location attributes. These opportunity sites are discussed more fully in section 4.2: Development Potential.

### Methodology

Potential opportunity sites have been classified into three categories: vacant, underutilized sites, and vacant or underutilized sites that are part of specific or master plan areas.

1. Vacant sites contain no development or are used as surface parking lots; 428 acres have been identified as having potential for redevelopment.
2. Underutilized sites refer to sites that have some existing (and even recent) development that is low density and available for intensification;

or existing structures that may be at the end of its useful life during the planning period and appropriate for redevelopment. For example, a parcel may contain a low-rise building surrounded by surface parking, with room for greater intensities or an older commercial strip mall with a high vacancy rate that is well located for new mixed use development. In total, 485 acres of underutilized land have been identified for potential redevelopment.

3. Vacant or underutilized sites that lie within approved master or specific plan area may be developed consistent with the plan and will contribute to the city's ability to meet residential and non-residential demand, as well as demand for community resources. Notably, if the plan is amended or is not built, there may be opportunity for development or redevelopment different from the current stipulations of the master or specific plans. These sites total 1,419 acres.

The following method was used to determine "opportunity" sites. The first three steps apply to underutilized sites, which contain existing structures or uses. The last two steps apply to both vacant and underutilized sites.

- **Assessed Building Value/Land Value Ratio.** First, we compared the assessed building value to the land value for each site. This ratio (building value/land value) indicates whether the site is being used up to its potential. Building values that are less than their land values indicate that there is potential for redevelopment. Whereas, building values that exceed land values indicate that redevelopment is likely unnecessary and inappropriate.
- **Building Intensity.** Next, we identified sites with low intensity uses, which may indicate a potential for intensification in the future. This may mean that buildings are small compared to the overall site (e.g. low in height, small in size, or contain large surface parking lots or unused land). The ratio of building floor area to overall site area—the FAR value, as defined in Chapter 2—provides a metric. Sites with FAR values of 0.15 or less were identified as having potential

for redevelopment or expansion. At this FAR threshold, no more than 15% of the land area contains building improvements and the site may be considered substantially underutilized.

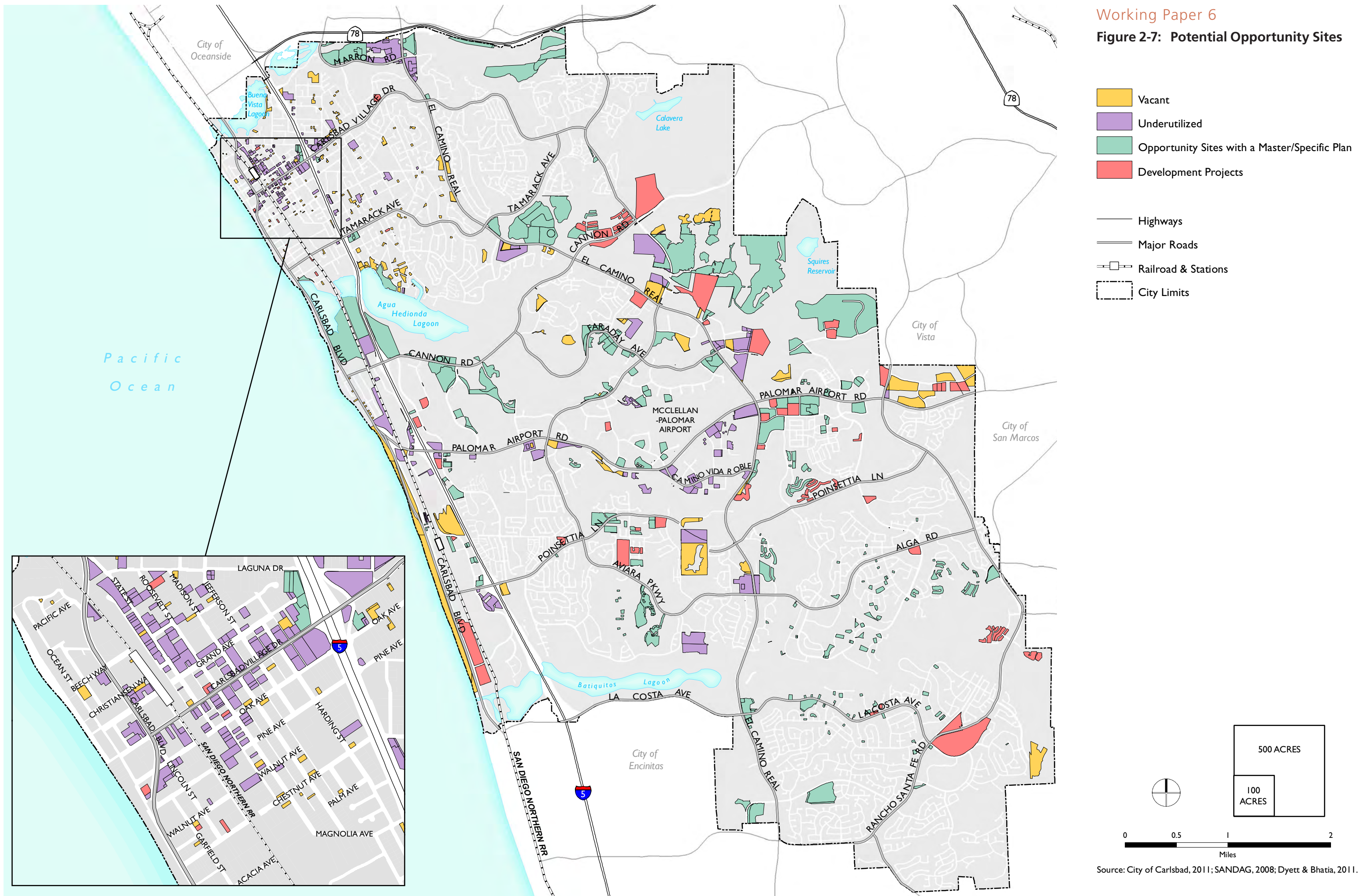
- **Elimination of Existing Uses.** Sites with existing residential uses, educational or institutional uses, existing recreation areas and protected open space and transportation and utilities infrastructure were excluded from the analysis, as major reuse of these uses is unlikely. Vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial sites tend to have the greatest opportunity for redevelopment.
- **Site Constraints.** Environmental and physical factors, such as sites with steep slopes and flood potential, may constrain development opportunities on both vacant and underutilized sites. These factors were evaluated as described in Section 4.1 and sites were removed as potential opportunity sites accordingly.
- **Windshield Survey and Discussions with Staff.** Following the application of the methods described above, a map was prepared showing a first draft of potential development sites. A “windshield” survey was conducted to check the validity of sites and identify any constraints that may not have been revealed during the analysis, but became clear through a site visit. In addition, City staff provided input about known site availability and pending or proposed projects.

## Constraints

Development constraints due to environmental and physical factors reduce the potential for development on some potential development opportunity sites. Potential constraints include locations within existing or proposed HMP Hardline Conservation Areas; existing or proposed HMP Standards Areas; 100-year flood zones; airport noise impact areas; and areas that have steep slopes (defined as over 25 percent). As a result, some potential opportunity sites may require mitigations to reduce environmental constraints or may be determined inappropriate for development. Potential opportunity sites have not been removed from the inventory due to potential constraints, but they are overlaid together on Figure 2-8.

There are other constraints to development, not mapped here, such as the Zoning Ordinance constrained lands list per section 21.53.230, coastal policies such as dual criteria slopes and other state requirements. For example, slope constraints entail detailed site level calculations: no more than fifty percent of the portion of a site containing twenty-five to forty percent slopes may be utilized for calculating allowable residential density. Residential development on slopes with of 25 to 40 percent, inclusive, shall be designed to minimize the amount of grading necessary to accommodate the project. For projects within the Coastal Zone, the grading provisions of the Carlsbad Local Coastal Program and Chapters 21.38 and 21.203 of the Municipal Code shall apply. In addition, the I-5 widening project brings both constraints and opportunities: expanding the right-of-way precludes new development that could have taken place along the freeway, but enhancement projects are planned to provide a nature center at the La Costa Avenue intersection and trails along Batiquitos and Agua Hedionda lagoons.

Figure 2-7: Potential Opportunity Sites



- Vacant
- Underutilized
- Opportunity Sites with a Master/Specific Plan
- Development Projects
- Highways
- Major Roads
- Railroad & Stations
- City Limits

500 ACRES

100 ACRES

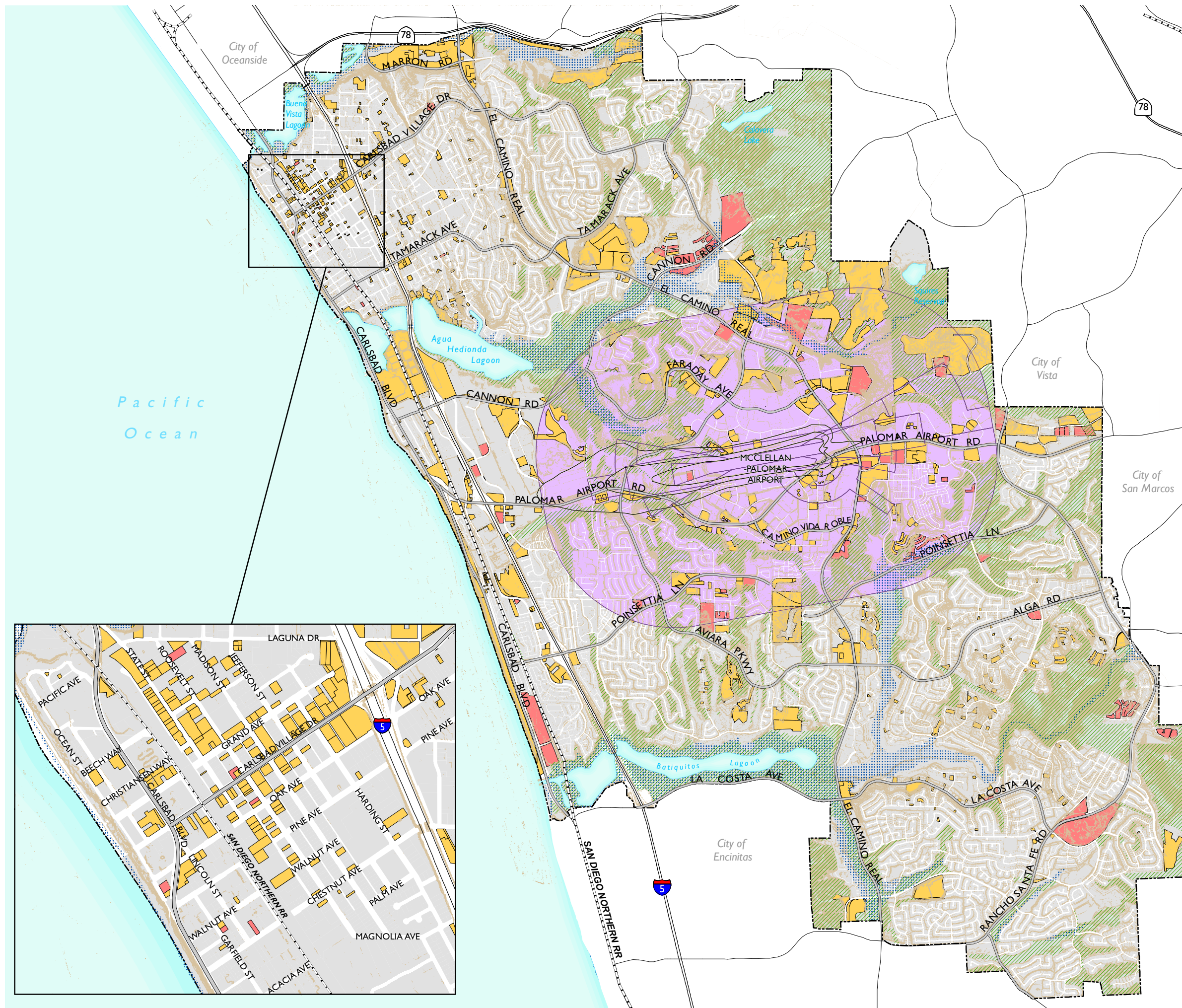
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Source: City of Carlsbad, 2011; SANDAG, 2008; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.

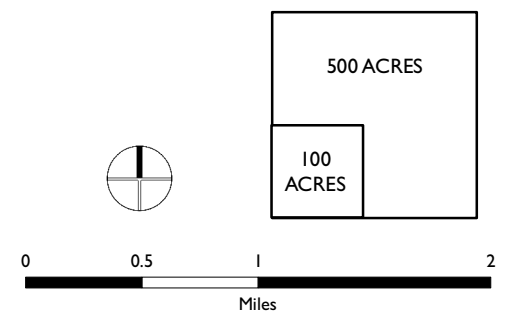
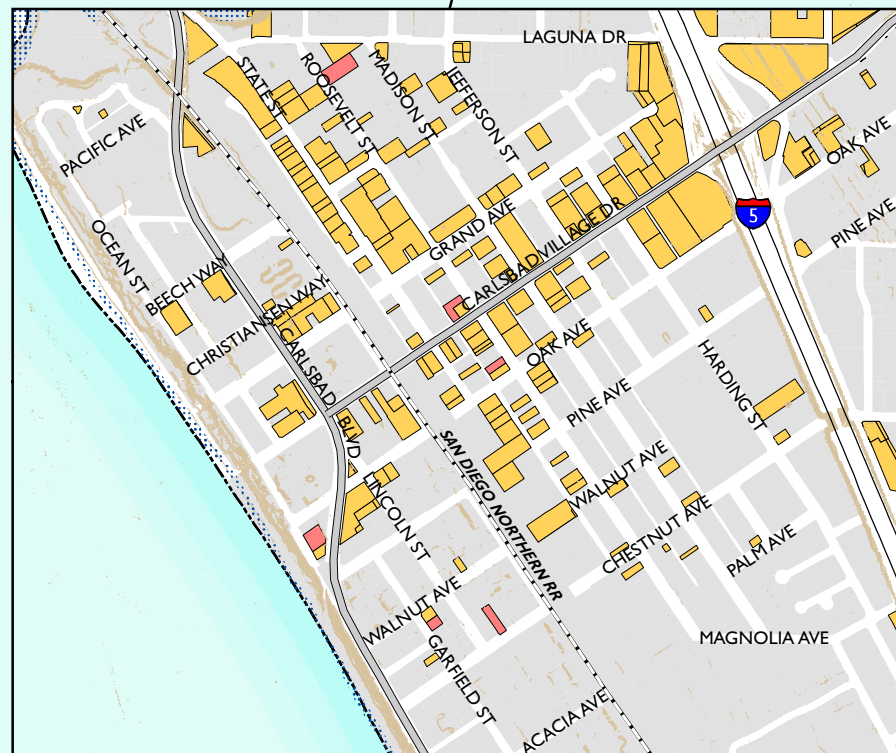




Working Paper 6  
**Figure 2-8: Development Constraints**



- Development Projects
- Opportunity Sites
- Slope > 25%
- 100-year Flood Plain
- Existing and Proposed Hardline Conservation Area
- Airport Noise Contour Area > 65dB
- Airport Safety Zones 1-6
- Highways
- Major Roads
- Railroad
- City Limits



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2011; SANDAG, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.



# 3 Community Design and Livability



Community design comprises physical elements such as buildings, trees, streets, sidewalks and street furnishings, as well as the activities and the pace of life that they accommodate. Ultimately, the location, orientation and design of these physical elements determine how intimate and cohesive a city feels. To aid the discussion on the existing and future community design context of Carlsbad, this chapter contains discussion on the citywide character and small town feel; and analysis of built forms and structures that shape the city's physical identity. It also explores two key features that affect a community's livability and which were targeted in the Community Vision: access to the beach and to basic shopping needs and services.

## 3.1 Small Town "City"

The Envision Carlsbad Phase 1 visioning work culminated in a clear understanding of how community members perceive the city. In particular, the core value "Small Town Feel, Beach Community Character and Connectedness" expresses defining attributes of the city's identity. When translated onto the physical landscape, it evokes the image of a small town where neighborhoods are nestled between rolling hills; a beach community with miles of beaches, lagoons and trails; and a resident population whose stewardship of the city's natural assets and active engagement in community activities serve as reminders of the city's connectedness.

Despite its relatively large size and abundant amenities, Carlsbad has maintained its small-town quality through the scale of development, pace of life and community members' connectedness

to their neighbors and the community. Development tends to be low density, allowing mature trees and expansive open spaces to dominate the landscape. The city's beaches and long coastline suggest a slower pace of life, projecting a "village by the sea" character that community members relish. Moreover, the city and private developments have been careful in their site planning, screening larger developments (such as Costco and shopping centers) with natural topography, berms or landscaping to make them less visible from the street. Residents feel connected to the community through volunteerism and philanthropy, and want this sense of connectedness to be reflected in the built environment.

Most notably, the prevalence and easy access to preserved hills and open areas maintain Carlsbad's small town atmosphere. One can safely access open space and natural areas from anywhere in the city. Residents jog along meandering trails that connect neighborhoods to nearby knolls and lagoons, and cyclists and drivers can take in calming views of rolling hills, the beach, or the lagoons as they travel. Weekends can be spent hiking with the family or strolling along the beach. In this manner, natural areas and open spaces are a vital part of Carlsbad's lifestyle and community identity. These opportunities and activities support community consecutiveness, through formal and informal interactions between families, friends, neighbors, and passersby.

## 3.2 City Form and Structure

Though natural features in Carlsbad may tie the city together, both natural and built infrastructure define and bound the city's physical form, affecting development opportunities and circulation. The city is approximately 42 square miles, extending 10 miles between the cities of Oceanside in the north and Encinitas in the south. At its widest point, the city extends 5.7 miles from the Pacific Ocean to the City of San Marcos. The railroad and I-5 traverse the city lengthwise one quarter- and one half-mile from the ocean, respectively. Five major roads run north-south: Carlsbad Boulevard (along the coast), El Camino Real, College Boulevard, Melrose Drive, and Rancho Santa Fe Road; and six major roads connect east-west: Carlsbad Village Drive, Tamarack Avenue, Cannon Road, Palomar Airport Road, Poinsettia Lane, and La Costa Avenue. Clusters of major land uses—open spaces, employment centers, the airport, shopping centers and residential neighborhoods—and the city's built infrastructure—including the freeway, railroad and major roads—comprise the form of the city.

The following section describes the way each element of the city's structure strengthens or diminishes the city's physical identity as a small town beach community. These elements are illustrated graphically in Figure 3-1, and reference issues of connectivity discussed in Working Paper #5 and open space conditions from Working Paper #3. Unlike Figure 2-3, which shows a detailed existing land use of the city, Figure 3-1 shows a generalized land use to depict a broader sense of the city's land use organization, including where community members might live, work, and shop.

### Natural Resources, Open Space and Water Bodies

Natural areas and open spaces, including watershed features, hillsides, habitats, parks and vistas, are the most defining and integral component of the city's form and structure. The coastline and its beaches are prominent visual amenities that offer beautiful ocean views and recreation opportunities. These beaches connect to three of California's few remaining natural lagoons—Buena Vista,

Agua Hedionda and Batiquitos—that are rich with a diversity of plant, animal and aquatic wildlife and offer public amenities such as hiking trails, scenic views, fishing and water recreation. Hillsides layered with trees and brush, and the ever-changing topography they create, necessitate curvilinear streets and create unique intimate spaces that are the setting for many of Carlsbad's master planned communities and resorts. These enclaves, whether set along a hillside or within a valley, reinforce the small-town quality that Carlsbad residents have come to cherish and promote community connectedness. Similarly, remaining agricultural land and the Flower Fields strengthen the community's connection and intimacy with the natural environment and the city's agricultural heritage.

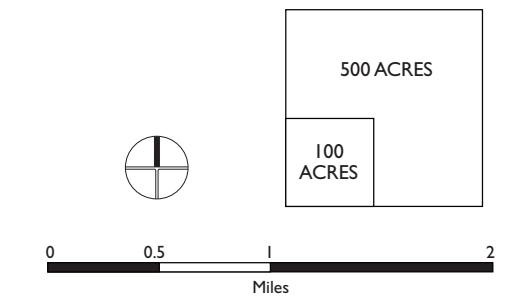
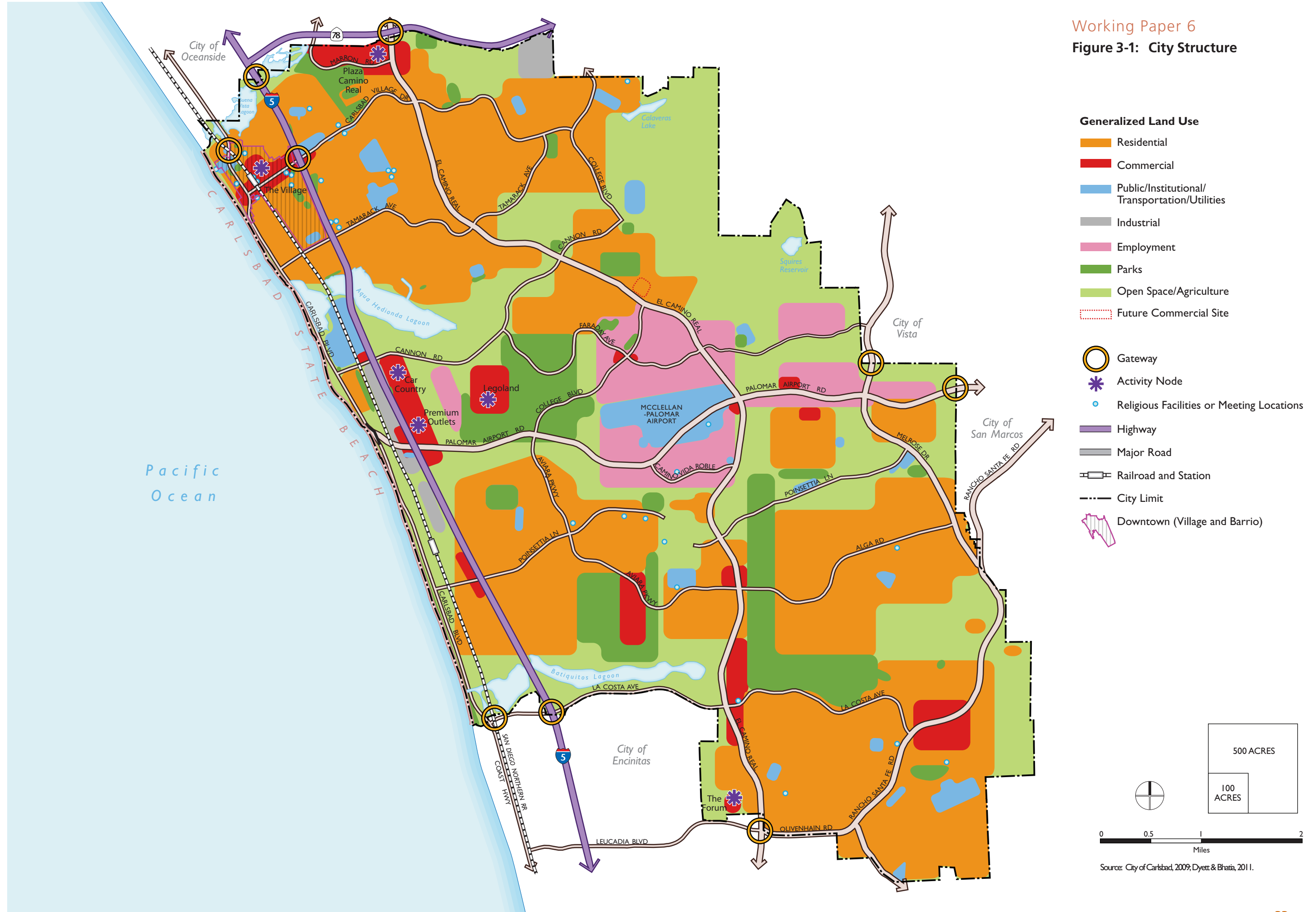
Natural features also help shape the city's network of manmade open spaces such as city parks, trails and golf courses, many of which extend to the eastern boundary of the city. Parks are distributed throughout the city and host a variety of passive and active resources that are integral to building a sense of community and promoting public health, quality of life, and connectedness. Although the city's natural resources and open spaces provide various amenities, they can create challenges to development and circulation. Watershed drainages give Carlsbad its rolling topography, but often result in steep slopes and protected habitat that preclude development. Additionally, the lagoons are natural barriers that have prevented through-routes, with only a few roads crossing over—generally Carlsbad Boulevard, the railroad tracks and I-5.

### Residential Neighborhoods

Carlsbad's residential neighborhoods are defined by two distinct planning eras: the neighborhoods developed on a grid street system within the older portion of the city, west of I-5, and a larger area of master-planned communities with organic street patterns east of I-5.

In the older residential neighborhoods, such as the Barrio, homes were often built by individual builders, resulting in greater variety in the housing stock. Homes in these older neighborhoods exhibit diverse architectural styles reflecting the city's long history:

Working Paper 6  
 Figure 3-1: City Structure



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.



early ornate Queen Anne homes, Spanish and Mission influences, craftsman bungalows and ranch houses evocative of a simpler and more laid back beach character. Typical buildings stand one to two stories tall, with more contemporary two- to four-story multi-family housing built along the coastline.

Master-planned communities east of I-5 were built under the city's Planned Community zoning designation that stipulates cohesive planning for housing types, open space, streets, landscaping and other amenities. Some of these communities are private for residents and guests of the development only. Homes in these communities tend to be detached single-family homes, built at low densities between one and eight units per acre. Only one or two streets provide connections to developments and surrounding through-streets tend to be auto-oriented arterials such that access is most appropriate by car. Within the developments, internal streets provide circulation or end in cul-de-sacs; sidewalks are provided for walking around the neighborhood; and the low level of vehicle traffic makes the residential streets relatively safe for children to play and bike along.

### Shopping Centers and Visitor-Serving Commercial Areas

A smaller portion of the city is dedicated to local and regional shopping centers. Some smaller shopping centers located at major crossroads meet the daily needs of local residents, while larger-scale shopping destinations generally near the freeway have a region-wide customer base. Local shopping plazas, hotels and visitor amenities are distributed along major roads such as El Camino Real, Palomar Airport Road and Rancho Santa Fe Road. The city's main regional shopping centers and destinations include the Village, Plaza Camino Real, The Forum, Premium Outlets and Car Country. The city is also well known for its luxury hotels and resorts including La Costa Resort and Spa and the Park Hyatt Aviara. These luxury facilities offer private, insular recreation areas in the hills which capture the advantages of topography, natural open space and views. The majority of Carlsbad's shopping and visitor facilities are only accessible by car, which precludes walking or bicycling to nearby services and amenities—a common small-town quality.

### Employment Uses

The city's employment centers are characterized by a much larger development scale than the residential neighborhoods. The Palomar Airport Road employment cluster, the city's main employment district, is located around the airport along Palomar Airport Road between Avenida Encinas and the city's eastern boundary. The area comprises the vast majority of the city's high-tech, office, light industrial and warehouse sectors. The Carlsbad Research Center alone has more than 7.5 million square feet of office, research and light industrial space, and is home to several of the city's top employers, including golf manufacturers and high-tech firms.

The employment cluster is highly car-oriented, with large-scale developments primarily accessed by Palomar Airport Road. Buildings are typically large-footprint structures (sometimes up to 600 feet in length) of one to two stories, with up to three stories in newer office and industrial buildings around the airport. Building entrances face parking lots and landscaped setbacks typically separate the front building façade from the street. There are few basic commercial services within these employment areas (e.g. dry cleaners, salons, places for lunch), so most employees in this area must drive for all personal services. Moreover, although there are sidewalks along this corridor, distances between most destinations are too far apart to make walking a realistic transportation option. Additional services, small central plazas or parks, and better connections to them could reduce driving needs, promote interaction, and improve overall quality of life.

### Roadway Infrastructure

I-5 and the city's major roads do not necessarily evoke a small-town quality—however, they do provide the link between Carlsbad's many “small-town” neighborhoods and destinations. The freeway, which bisects the city north to south, is the general division between older and newer parts of the city. Five major north-south roads (El Camino Real, Carlsbad Boulevard, College Boulevard, Melrose Drive, and Rancho Santa Fe Road) and six major east-west roads (Carlsbad Village Drive,

Tamarack Avenue, Cannon Road, Palomar Airport Road, Poinsettia Lane and La Costa Avenue) accommodate local vehicle traffic and are designed with speeds up to 55 miles an hour, two to six vehicle lanes, wide medians, bike lanes, minimal sidewalks and limited pedestrian crossings (at every 500 to 3,800 feet).

The large scale of the freeway, road bridges and major roads by themselves can detract from a small town identity. Carlsbad's roadway system, however, responds to its natural topography, curving and undulating with the hills, and often providing scenic views of the city's natural features. Most are buffered on each side by landscaped hills and conservation areas that separate them from residential neighborhoods. Though the scale and speed of these roads and infrastructure may not look the part, the views and the experience of driving along them at times conveys a sense of connectedness to the landscape, due to the prevalence of undeveloped open space adjacent to the right-of-way. Streetscape enhancements on specific routes to the beach and major destinations could help further relate Carlsbad's identity as a small town through signage, public art and emphasis on landscaping and recreational amenities.

### Trails, Promenades and Bikeways

Trails, promenades and bikeways are unique visual features and public amenities that evoke images of the city's beach community, small town feel and connectedness. Seawalls, the promenade and ramps that descend to the beach, trails that meander along major roads and separated and landscaped bikeways along the railroad in the Barrio not only foster connections, but are heavily used amenities where residents hike, jog and bike. When applied on a citywide scale, these types of amenities improve pedestrian and bike access while further enhancing neighborhood connection to natural surroundings. Parks and trails can also provide an opportunity to enhance community connectivity, through informal interactions to creating spaces for services and concessions.

### Gateways

Strategically placed and designed gateway signs provide opportunities to create a lasting impression of the city. A sign displaying the city name exists at Carlsbad Village Drive and I-5, and at the north end of Carlsbad Boulevard, but additional gateway opportunities still remain at several key entry points including exits off of I-5 at La Costa Avenue, at the city's north and south boundary at El Camino Real and Carlsbad Boulevard, at the eastern boundary along Palomar Airport Road, along Melrose Drive at the City of Vista boundary and at the train stations. Aside from signage, way-finding programs, public art, special lighting and landscape treatments can signify and celebrate entry into the city near the city's boundaries.

### Activity Nodes and Destinations

In this larger city composed of smaller, intimate neighborhoods, activity centers and religious facilities function as communal nodes where residents, workers and visitors connect. Events and activities provide opportunities for families to spend time together, friends to meet, and community members to mingle. While many of these activity nodes lie in the Village, along the coast, and in the I-5 corridor, there are many other activity sites elsewhere in the city that may not be as well utilized or advertised. For example, enhancing access to and programming within existing resources in the southern portion of the city, such as Dove Library, Cannon Art Gallery, Stagecoach Community Park and Leo Carrillo Historic Park, can improve the liveliness and community connectedness in the area.

Major existing activity nodes and centers identified in Figure 3-1 include:

- **Carlsbad Village.** The 215-acre neighborhood is home to much of Carlsbad's historic core and cultural amenities, and also provides entertainment, unique shopping and restaurants and access to Carlsbad State Beach.
- **Carlsbad State Beach.** Carlsbad beaches are popular destinations that cater to a wide range of visitors, including youth, families, and the elderly, who seek active and passive recreation.



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*Natural and manmade features comprise the city’s “structure,” with beaches, lagoons, topography and roadways providing a framework for circulation, development and open spaces.*



*Walking trails, bikeways, bike lanes and sidewalks help to connect neighborhoods and activity centers, provide recreation opportunities and contribute to the community’s beach character.*



*The “gateway” entrance along Carlsbad Boulevard from the north (left) can take better advantage of the lagoon to highlight entry into the city. Improved signage that exemplifies the city’s character can help to create a unique entrance (middle). Streetscape elements at the Village Station (right) are successful in highlighting the city’s small-town beach character.*

Defining features include seawalls, ramps and stairs that accommodate visitors from the street to the lower beach level.

- **Legoland.** A private, 128-acre amusement park with rides connected by walkable interior streets and open space. The park is completely hidden from surrounding streets by landscaped berms and setbacks along its boundary.
- **Plaza Camino Real.** A 90-acre enclosed regional shopping mall surrounded by surface parking—a typical mall design concept of the 1960s through the 80s, which is a potential opportunity for new intensified development.
- **Premium Outlets.** An open-air mall that—similar to other lifestyle shopping centers—is reached by car but traversed by foot in a pedestrian-oriented outdoor environment.
- **Car Country.** A well-established cluster of auto dealerships extending 1.5 miles along Car Country Drive and Paseo del Norte.
- **The Forum at Carlsbad.** A thriving outdoor shopping mall oriented to vehicle access. Buildings and surface parking are arranged along corridors rather than one large surface parking lot to provide short walking distances to shopping destinations.
- **Parks and Public Facilities.** City Hall, parks, recreation facilities and other open spaces are destinations for residents, businesses and visitors.
- **Religious Facilities.** Religious centers provide opportunities for community gathering for regular services and other events.

These nodes comprise many of the city’s major regional destinations and draws—smaller nodes throughout the city, which provide key services and

amenities to residents and workers, are discussed in the context of accessibility to shops and services below.

### 3.3 Accessibility to Shops and Services

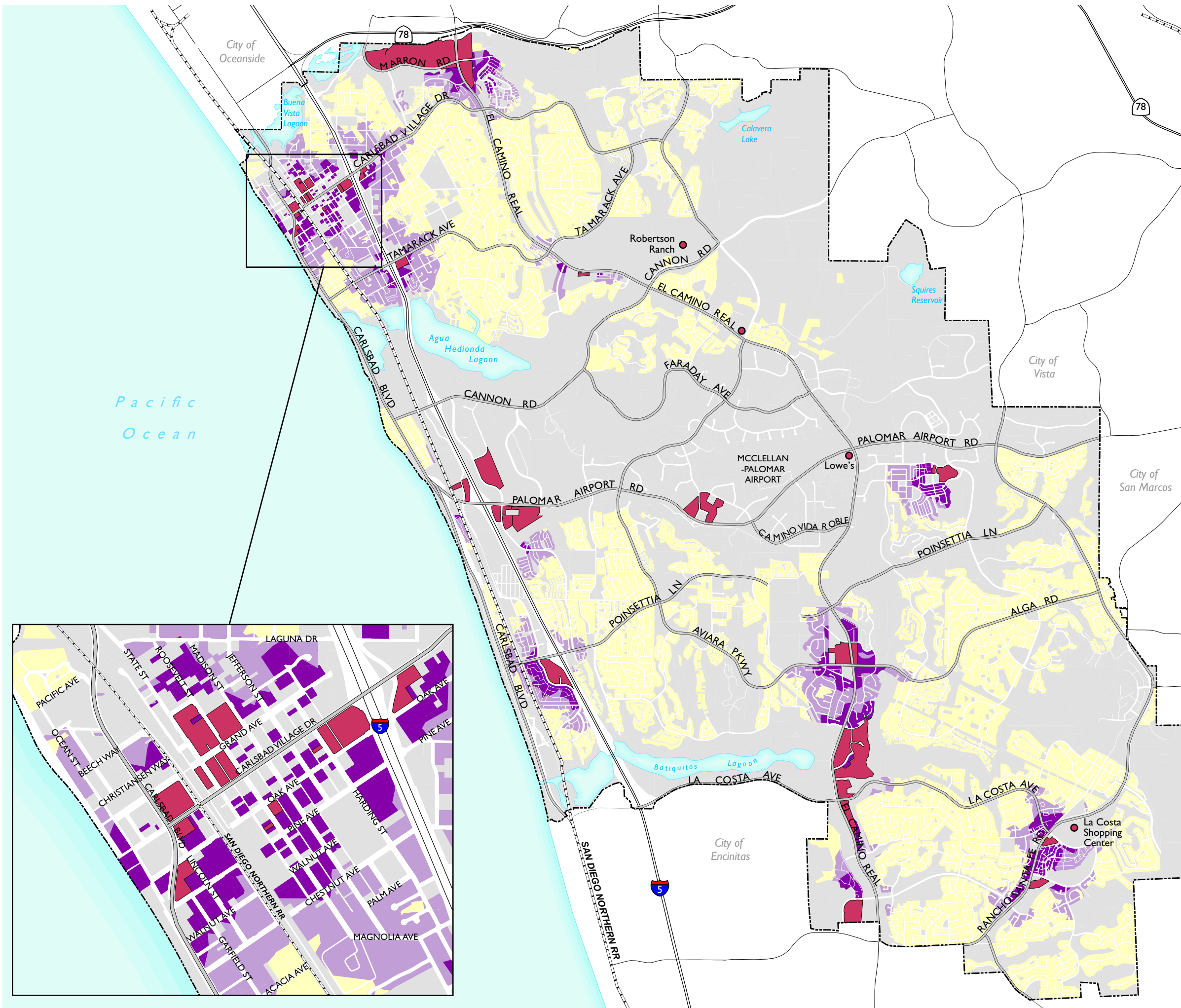
Neighborhood-serving shops include grocery stores, restaurants, retail stores, cafés and other businesses that serve the daily needs of local residents. In traditional small town design, residents can access shops and services on foot. This has the added benefit of promoting interactions between community members as they walk between destinations. In Carlsbad, residents are more likely to drive to shopping centers. Figure 3-2 shows an analysis of residents’ reasonable walking distances to shopping services (the quarter-mile and half-mile radii show five and ten-minute walking distances, respectively). As summarized in Table 3-1, about ten percent of residents live within a five-minute walk of some shopping amenities and about half (51 percent) of residents reside within a ten-minute walking distance.

*However, proximity to neighborhood centers does not mean that walking is productive, feasible or safe. The closest neighborhood shopping center may not offer the kinds of daily services households require, such as a pharmacy, grocery store or dry cleaner. Residents also may choose to drive because walking is challenging due to changes in topography, missing sidewalks and lack of pedestrian connections and amenities between residences and local shopping centers, as well as the challenge of walking with shopping bags. Walking to local shops can become a reality only if shops and residential areas prioritize walkable connections between shops and homes at the conceptual design phase.*

| TABLE 3-1: ACCESSIBILITY TO SHOPPING CENTERS – WALKING DISTANCE ANALYSIS |                           |         |  |         |               |         |
|--|---------------------------|---------|--|---------|---------------|---------|
|  | ¼-MILE<br>(5-MINUTE WALK) |         | ½-MILE<br>(10-MINUTE WALK WHICH<br>INCLUDES 5-MINUTE WALK<br>AREA) |         | BEYOND ½ MILE |         |
|  | acres                     | percent | acres  | percent | acres         | percent |
| Existing Residential Land Use  | 689                       | 10 %    | 3,484  | 51%     | 3,313         | 49%     |

Source: City of Carlsbad, 2010; Dyett & Bhatia, 2010.

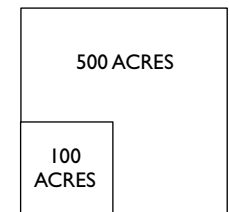
Figure 3-2: Accessibility to Shops and Services



- Shopping Centers
- Future Shopping Centers

- Residential Areas**
- Within 1/4 Mile Walking Distance
  - Within 1/2 Mile Walking Distance
  - Beyond 1/2 Mile Walking Distance

- Highways
- Major Roads
- Railroad
- City Limits



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2009; SANDAG, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.



As shown in Figure 3-3, two shopping centers, one at Bressi Ranch and one at the corner of Rancho Santa Fe and Camino de Los Coches, demonstrate two different ways that local shopping centers address the needs of non-motorized visitors:

- The Bressi Village Shopping Center has three main entries: two car entries at Gateway Road off of El Camino Real and at El Fuente Street at Palomar Airport Road and one pedestrian entry at an open village square facing the nearest residential neighborhoods. The shopping area is part of a larger Bressi Ranch community that includes multi-family housing, retail, open space, a private school, community center and offices, and is a recent project that adheres to contemporary community design concepts that emphasize walkability. The shopping center includes everyday shopping needs such as a grocery store, coffee shop, frozen yogurt shop and a hair salon. Stores are situated as individual buildings connected with wide sidewalks, special paved pedestrian crossings and landscaped curb extensions at mid-block crossings. Building massing accentuates entrances and awnings; canopies highlight entries and provide shaded walkways. Interior blocks are short and walkable; pedestrian-scaled lighting and street trees consistently line wide sidewalks. A park and small plaza provide outdoor seating and relaxation areas for shoppers. In summary, the development is built at a scale that is attractive and convenient for pedestrians, while also accommodating access by vehicles. Dining establishments at the neighborhood center are often filled with patrons from outside the neighborhood.
- In contrast, the shopping center at Rancho Santa Fe and Camino de Los Coches demonstrates how pedestrian access can be impeded when neither the layout of residential neighborhoods nor the shopping center provide adequate pedestrian connections. The shopping center is located adjacent to Rancho Santa Fe Road, which is a six lane prime arterial roadway with high traffic volume. The center is also located on a hillier part of the city with substantial grade differences between the street and the shopping

area. Surrounding residential neighborhoods sit at varying elevations and are often blocked off from the main street by walls or cul-de-sacs that terminate instead of connect through to main streets. The shopping center has two main vehicle entries with buildings that surround surface parking. Although the parking lot has landscaped islands and paved crosswalks leading to its buildings, the development lacks street furniture, gathering space, or pedestrian amenities that connect to surrounding neighborhoods. Providing connections after the fact would require placing mid-block crossings, creating an easement between existing homes to provide stairs and creating openings along boundary walls.

### 3.4 Beach Access and Activity

While detailed discussion on circulation and access to the beach can be found in working papers #3 and #5, the following section discusses how existing beach access strengthens or diminishes a connected, small-town beach community identity.

#### Connectivity

In a small town, one would expect to be able to walk everywhere. Moreover, in a small “beach” town, residents would expect to be able to walk to the beach. In Carlsbad, a simple walk to the beach is only available to residents that live along the coastline; the remaining majority of Carlsbad residents must access the beach by car, reducing connectedness among community members and potential interactions among neighbors and friends. With the city’s natural topography and physical barriers created by I-5, the railroad, and the three lagoons, this access is limited even for drivers. These connections and constraints are illustrated in Figure 3-4.

#### Vehicular Access to the Beach

Vehicle access to the beach is limited to six major roads: Carlsbad Village Drive, Tamarack Avenue, Cannon Road, Palomar Airport Road, Poinsettia Lane and La Costa Avenue, as illustrated on Figure 3-5 and Figure 3-6, depicting conditions downtown

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### Figure 3-3: Shopping Center Site Design Comparison

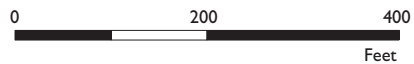
#### Shopping Center at Bressi Ranch

- 1 Buildings and built structures frame main vehicular entrance
- 2 Residential gridded street network
- 3 12-foot wide sidewalk with pedestrian lighting, street trees and awnings and canopies along storefronts
- 4 Pedestrian entrance
- 5 Landscaped curb-extension at mid-block crossings
- 6 Extensive landscape provides buffer from major roads
- 7 Pedestrian paths from major roads
- 8 Vehicle entrance

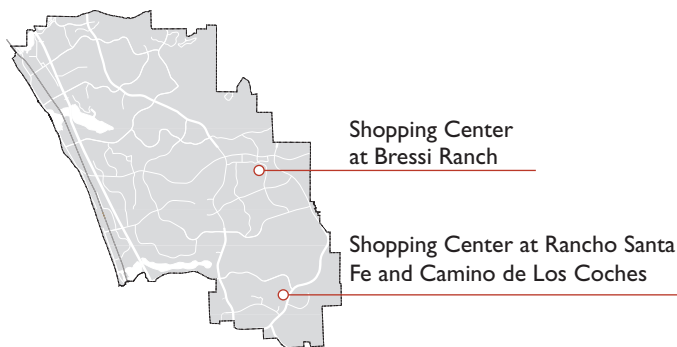


#### Shopping Center at Rancho Santa Fe and Camino de Los Coches

- 1 Walls and cul-de-sacs at residential neighborhoods prevent direct connection
- 2 Pedestrian path does not connect across to the shopping center
- 3 Shared pedestrian and vehicle entrance
- 4 Landscaped islands at surface parking and paved crosswalk
- 5 Residential buildings designed around cul-de-sacs



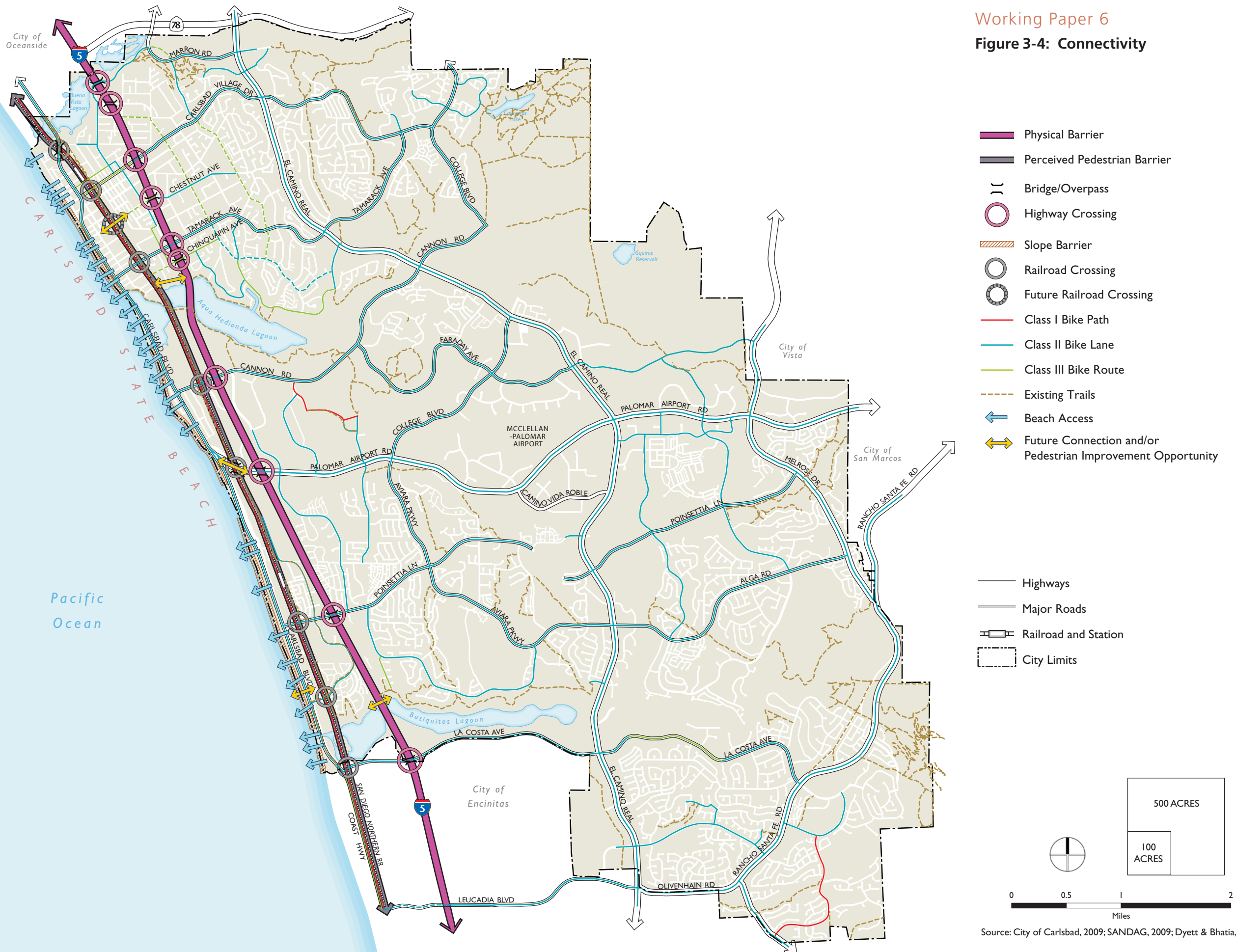
Source: City of Carlsbad, 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011



Key Map

Pedestrian Routes From Residential Area to Shopping Center ———

Figure 3-4: Connectivity



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2009; SANDAG, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.





and citywide, respectively. Both local and regional visitors exiting off I-5 use these roads to connect to Carlsbad Boulevard, which runs parallel to the ocean. For residents west of I-5 and only half a mile from the beach, access is often necessary by car as well, as the rail corridor only allows access at designated crossings or road bridges.

Getting to the beach is difficult, but limited parking at peak seasons can also delay beach access. While on-street parking and surface lots located within the Village and at two paid parking lots located at North and South Carlsbad State Beach meet daily parking needs, they are often insufficient during peak seasons.

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to Beach

Compared to driving, walking to the beach is even more constrained due to limited sidewalks, crosswalks and stair and ramp access. Currently, only four streets provide sidewalks for pedestrian access over or under I-5 and the rail corridor: Carlsbad Village Drive, Tamarack Avenue, Cannon Road and Poinsettia Lane. Sidewalks are not provided on La Costa Avenue and Palomar Airport Road where they cross over the railroad. Crosswalks along waterfront streets such as Carlsbad Boulevard are limited to the Village area and are infrequent along areas south of Agua Hedionda Lagoon. In some areas, crosswalks are located only at every half mile, limiting people to jaywalking or unnecessarily lengthening their walk. The city is planning a new connection (over- or underpass) across the railroad from Chestnut Avenue at railroad.

An elevation change along the coastline and the presence of private waterfront residences within the downtown area also constrain access. Pedestrian access from the street level to the beach is limited to narrow stairs between houses and hotels and steep ramps. Though additional trail access is planned over the I-5 at Batiquitos Lagoon, across Carlsbad Boulevard between Ponto Road and Avenida Encinas, and between I-5 and the railroad near Agua Hedionda Lagoon, ADA-accessible connection from higher street elevation to the beach is still limited to ramps from beach parking lots.



*Beach access is constrained by physical and perceived barriers, including roadways and the railroad, and limited parking availability, especially at peak hours.*



*Stairs and ramps are used to access the beach, given the elevation change from street level.*



*Promenades and overlook points with seating allow community members and visitors to enjoy the ocean views.*

Waterfront areas lack signage that point out entry points, adjacent facilities and ADA access. Bicycle activity is also limited due to limited number of lockers, showers, rental shops and bike repair stores.

### Views

Visual access plays an important role to orient people and to communicate a sense of a small beach town to visitors. Existing infrastructure such as the promenade and overlook points along the waterfront provide venues to appreciate and connect with the beach. Such areas and beach trails are physical reflections of the community's appreciation of natural and shared resources and stewardship toward conservation. However, considering the city's proximity to the beach, opportunities to appreciate such views are constrained due to rows of residential homes or hotels blocking the view from public streets and the lack of waterfront activity areas open to the public.

### Waterfront Uses and Activities

Unlike other beach towns, Carlsbad State Beach is not equipped with typical beach town amenities such as an active waterfront street. Although public uses (recreation and park land) represent about 88% of coastal land uses in the city, near Carlsbad Village Drive and the Cannon Road intersections, there are several private uses situated along the coast. Residences and a few hotels dominate the waterfront, limiting waterfront areas to exercise and sightseeing and abruptly ending activities along. Though the promenade and the beach remain popular destinations, they lack adjoining waterfront activities—places where people can eat, shop and passively connect with the ocean while taking in the views of the sand, water and sunset. During the Envision Carlsbad Phase 1 process, community members voiced concerns over diminished beach town character due to lack of waterfront activities. They are seeking opportunities to engage with other residents and amenities that serve their needs.

One of the main challenges to creating new active waterfront area is the lack of available non-residential parcels. Most waterfront land is occupied by private residences or undevelopable hillsides or

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bluffs. Still, a few underutilized parcels exist west of the railroad. Figure 3-7 shows the waterfront character, including land use and opportunity areas along the coastline. To create a successful and active waterfront area, these opportunity sites should be considered for their ability to accommodate a cluster of active uses such as restaurants, gathering spaces, shops and cafes; to connect physically and visually to the beach; to draw from and extend existing activity along Carlsbad Village Drive; and to allow ADA access to the beach through a multi-level space at the street and the beach level.

Additionally, given the limited amount of available waterfront properties, existing land uses such as beach surface parking could be reconsidered for uses that better serve the community and that reflect the true value of the land. Relocation or construction of a public parking structure elsewhere as a joint effort between the city and the State Parks Department could free up waterfront parcels to be explored for active waterfront retail or public uses.

The proposed Carlsbad Boulevard realignment project and property exchange with State Parks serves as an important opportunity to improve coastal access and waterfront amenities. In July, 2000, the City of Carlsbad together with the Carlsbad Housing and Redevelopment Commission adopted the South Carlsbad Coastal Redevelopment Area (SCCRA) Plan. One of the goals set forth within the SCCRA Plan is to provide funding for the realignment of Carlsbad Boulevard which has the potential to yield excess property that could facilitate expansion of the Carlsbad State Beach campgrounds and/or provide for other recreational facilities and desirable community amenities. There are ten guiding principles for the realignment project, which include providing “physical connectivity through multi-modal mobility improvements including bikeways, pedestrian trails, and a traffic-calmed roadway”; “social connectivity through creation of memorable public spaces”; and “economic vitality through a combination of visitor and local-serving commercial, civic, and recreational uses and services.”.



*Providing amenities along the waterfront can contribute to the vibrancy of the beach and attract new users. On larger opportunity sites, the city may be able to add housing, public uses, and parking facilities to increase activity and build on the beach community character.*

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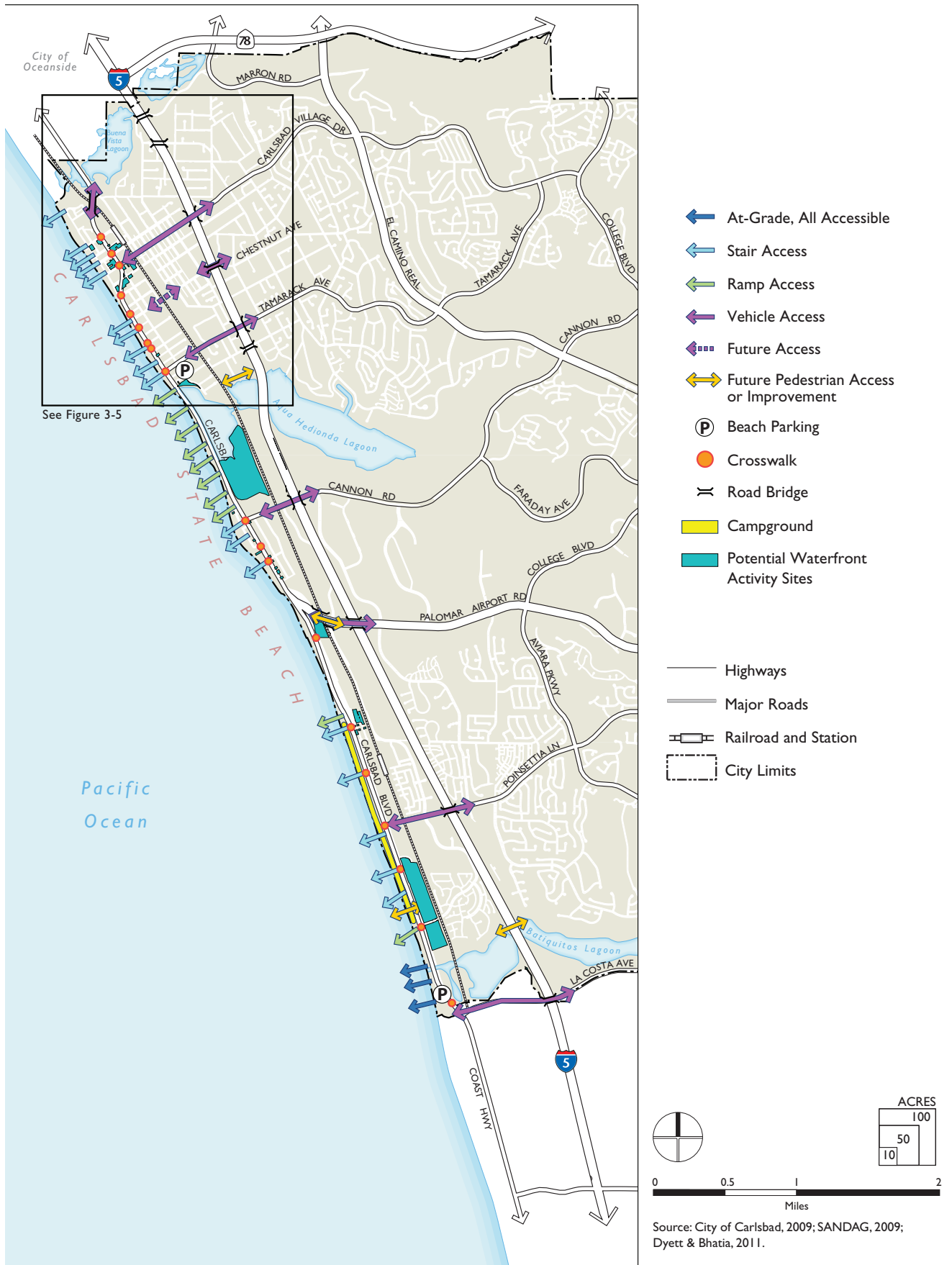
## Figure 3-5: Downtown Beach Access and Waterfront Activity



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2009; SANDAG, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011.

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## Figure 3-6: Beach Access and Waterfront Activity (Citywide)



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Figure 3-7: Waterfront Character



**North of The Village:** Primarily large luxury residences along the water with narrow public staircases leading to the beach.

**Village:** Views to the water are cut-off by buildings. The area comprises residential uses, consisting of a mix of larger-scale multifamily developments to the north, and single-family homes to the south, along with a couple of small hotels. Uses one or two lots east of the waterfront are commercial—large hotels and retail uses—as well as residential developments.

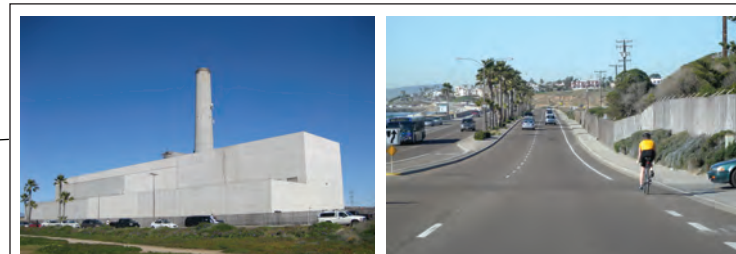


**Oak to Walnut:** Views to the water open up dramatically. Parks along the water are intensely used. Both sides of Carlsbad Boulevard are lined with a couple of restaurants, hotels and stores.

**North of Agua Hedionda Lagoon:** Mostly one- to two-story residential buildings and a few three-story buildings to the east and open space. To the west, stairs connect visitors from the promenade to the beach.



**Agua Hedionda Lagoon:** View of the lagoon and wetlands to the east and the ocean to the west.



**Industrial Area South of Agua Hedionda Lagoon:** Hills and industrial uses such as the power plant limit active waterfront uses to the east. To the west, trails descend down a gradual slope to the beach.



**South of Cannon Road:** Cluster of single-family residential buildings located along the ocean block waterfront views from Carlsbad Boulevard. Similar developments are built on the west side.



**South of Palomar Airport Road:** Area south of Palomar Airport Road is dominated by a mobile home park and flanked to the north and south end by hotels.



**North and South of Poinsettia Lane:** Area north of Poinsettia Lane comprises more recently developed, large residential buildings on the east side and RVs at the campgrounds on the west side. Open space, pedestrian trails and bikeways along Carlsbad Boulevard are heavily used, but east-west connection across the street remains limited.





# 4 Neighborhood Revitalization



To maximize revitalization opportunities, both as new developments on underutilized or vacant parcels or as part of renovation of older buildings, this chapter explores opportunities to strengthen the city's identity as a cohesive, small-scale beach community. Section 4.1 reviews revitalization possibilities at a conceptual level: exploring renovation, transit-oriented development, streetscape, and bike/pedestrian trail improvements. Section 4.2 describes potential locations within the city.

## 4.1 Revitalization Possibilities

Revitalization, in essence, makes a place more attractive, safe and inviting—for residents, people who work in the area, or those that visit. Revitalization efforts can be realized in many ways, including: renovation of existing buildings to improve or expand facades and facilities; introduction of new uses through infill developments; co-location of and planning for transit, provision of housing and jobs through transit-oriented development; enhanced waterfront infrastructure and active uses in waterfront areas; and pedestrian-oriented urban design improvements at the ground level including streetscape and façade improvements. In addition to physical changes, the City can support events and activities to encourage community members to visit the Village or other neighborhoods in the city. Already the farmers' market and annual sporting events are big draws to the city.

This report seeks to build on the core value of supporting civic engagement, volunteerism and philanthropy in the community through physical planning. Community members can assist in the revitalization of their community by having a voice in City policy and capital projects and volunteering

time and/or resources to creating places and programs that reflect the community's vision. Each of these avenues of revitalization discussed below presents new opportunities to strengthen the city's small town feel, beach community character and connectedness.

## Renovation and Rehabilitation

Renovations to existing buildings and facades can improve the visual appeal of structures and improve or expand existing facilities and services. The city can capitalize on Community Development Block Grant and other funds, continue code enforcement, and provide incentives for residential rehabilitation in older neighborhoods.

Several shopping centers are ripe for renovation, including North Country Plaza, the center at the southeast corner of La Costa Ave and El Camino Real, the center on the northeast corner of El Camino Real and Alga Road, the Country Store site, Village Plaza, and the Vons center on Tamarack Avenue. Some of these efforts are already underway. For example, Plaza Camino Real and the North Country Plaza center is ripe for renovation. This two-level Plaza Camino Real, an enclosed regional shopping mall, built in 1969, is undergoing approval for interior and exterior renovation. Recent plans for the mall include a modest renovation with additional retail space along with exterior and interior renovations.<sup>3</sup> While renovations may improve the appearance for now, to compete with modern design and layout of modern shopping centers, revitalization of this shopping center may

<sup>3</sup> Signs on San Diego, "Mall Owner Vows to Improve Look of Aging Property" by Michael Burge, September 5, 2009, <http://www.signon-sandiego.com/news/2009/sep/05/mall-owner-vows-improve-look-aging-property/>

require a more innovative and extensive redevelopment. As another example, many homes in the Barrio, along Jefferson Street and Garfield Street, and businesses near the Coaster Station in the Village are older and in need of revitalization. As the most walkable areas in the city, these neighborhoods are good candidates for building and street improvements. (A detailed analysis of revitalization opportunities in the Village and Barrio are discussed in chapters 5 and 6, respectively.)

### Transit-oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (TOD) typically refers to development that is within easy walking distance of a major transit stop and that both capitalizes on and supports transit ridership. Development may be renovation and/or intensification of existing facilities, or new infill development. Transit stops may be rail stations, major bus stops, or other well-used transit stations. The TOD catchment area is typically a half-mile radius, or ten-minute walk, around the station/stop, with the greatest likelihood for transit ridership located within a quarter-mile radius, or five-minute walk. TOD should be designed at the pedestrian scale, since all transit trips begin and end as walking trips.

TOD is typically moderate to higher density development, with a mix of residential, employment and shopping uses. Appropriate densities depend on the community context (urban or suburban) and transit ridership capacity (e.g. bus vs. rail), but should be at least six or seven units per acre. Researchers have shown that ten percent increases in population or employment density were associated with a five and two percent increase in ridership, respectively.<sup>4</sup> Higher densities are an important part of the TOD definition in order to maximize riders close to transit, reduce development area devoted to parking and support shopping, open space and pedestrian amenities. In other words, a community cannot support the amenities inspired by a TOD opportunity without customers (residents or employees). Though typically composed of a mix of uses, depending on the city or site context, TOD areas or

projects may be more oriented toward residential development or employment uses. For residential TOD projects, young professionals (ages 20 to 34) without children and the elderly are least likely to be car-dependent and have the greatest likelihood of riding transit if nearby. These two age groups have the highest projected growth between now and 2040 in Carlsbad, according to the analysis in Working Paper #2.<sup>5</sup>

Sites most appropriate for TOD in the city include Carlsbad Village Coaster Station at Grand Avenue and State Street; Plaza Camino Real at State Route 78 and El Camino Real; Quarry Creek Area at Marron Road, west of College Boulevard and south of State Route 78; and Ponto beachfront at Avenida Encinas and Ponto Drive at Carlsbad Boulevard. These locations have the greatest proximity to major transit, employment uses, entertainment and shopping opportunities, as well as residential amenities. To facilitate TOD, parking requirements, density bonuses for affordable housing and programs for single-occupancy student and elderly housing should be explored. TOD in these locations could increase walking opportunities, adding to Carlsbad's small town beach community feel.

### Streetscape Improvements and Pedestrian-Oriented Development

In most cities, a lush streetscape and intimate scale of retail shops make walking and driving more enjoyable. In beach towns, this experience is enhanced by views of the beach, wide sidewalks fronting stores and restaurants and a mild climate. Many elements that make a successful small beach town exist in Carlsbad, especially in the Village. However, they occur in disconnected segments and will require additional improvements as part of new infill developments and streetscape improvements to complete a coherent image of a small beach town.

Carlsbad Village is a good example of a historic beach community downtown that, with strategic improvements, can enhance its vibrancy. Carlsbad Village was developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

4 See Caltrans "Statewide Transit-Oriented Development Study":48.

5 See Envision Carlsbad Working Paper #2: The Local Economy, Business Diversity, and Tourism: 33.

on gridded blocks with retail stores built up to the sidewalk and street trees that defined the city's downtown and main street. Since then, the city has repaved sidewalks, added street trees and crosswalks, as well as landscaped medians as part of streetscape improvements. However, these elements are not continuous throughout the Village. To reinforce the characteristics of the original downtown, new infill developments and design needs to be explored. These may include buildings with a zero-foot setback, large windows, appropriate storefront widths, streetscape improvements with consistent street tree layout, pedestrian lighting and landscaping.

Similarly, despite the fact that there is pedestrian activity in the Barrio, the current streetscape is not as hospitable as it could be to pedestrians. Streets are generally wide, and some are covered with rows of utility poles and overhead wires. Apart from short segments, most streets lack parkways and street trees. Existing street and sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate street improvements including parkways with swales, landscaped curb extensions with street furniture including benches and street lights at transit stops, landscaped medians and undergrounding of utilities.

Areas east of I-5 are primarily designed for cars, where non-residential developments have vast expanses of surface parking with limited pedestrian or bicycle amenities. Applying the core value of small town, beach community character to the physical design of these developments, surface parking areas could be enhanced by adding new pedestrian pathways, additional landscaping and water-saving permeable surfaces at parking lots and development entrances and pedestrian pathways that connect to surrounding development.

### Trails and Bike Lane Improvements

Miles of Class II bike lanes connect the city along its major roads, while many Class I bike trails traverse the city's natural areas. However, connections between the two could be improved and the network could be expanded to highlight key connections in the city. For pedestrians, numerous trails meander in and out of residential communities connecting

them to nearby natural preserves. However, they, too, are lacking in many neighborhoods and are not connected on a citywide scale. While expanding this network should be a key focus, opportunities to revitalize and improve existing facilities should also be considered. This could include completing the sidewalk network, such as in the Village, where sidewalks are discontinuous, widening existing sidewalks in areas where pedestrian-oriented and transit-oriented development could be improved, providing additional services and concessions, or improving pedestrian and bicycle freeway, rail or road crossings. Improving these crossings with lighting and public art can enhance areas under and over freeways and transform the crossing itself into a experiential expression of Carlsbad as a small beach town that promotes interaction among community members, a showcase where residents and visitors feel safe and engaged as they walk and bike the crossing.

## 4.2 Development Potential

As described in Chapter 2, an analysis of vacant and underutilized land reveals opportunities for new development and redevelopment over the next several decades. Potential opportunity areas are arranged into "focus areas" and discussed in more detail below. This analysis of potential land availability is then compared to the land use demand estimated in Working Paper #2. This provides a rough demand and supply assessment that will be explored further during the alternatives analysis of the planning process.

### Key Opportunity Sites/Focus Areas

#### Carlsbad Village

Carlsbad Village includes some of the city's most pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with the greatest access to shops and services, but also a high proportion of underutilized land (older structures, low densities and surface parking lots). During the Envision Carlsbad Phase 1 process, community members pointed to revitalization of the Village as "integral to promoting the city's identity" and a key

component of the General Plan update. Revitalization in the Village should capitalize on proximity to the Coaster station and build on the look, feel and vibrancy of the current Village. New residential development may attract seniors and young professionals, who want to live in a more walkable vibrant neighborhood. New stores and restaurants can serve new residents, transit users and visitors. The Village is discussed at greater length in Chapter 5.

### Barrio

Community members also pointed to the Barrio, as a neighborhood primed for rejuvenation, with an opportunity to capitalize on its location next to the Village and proximity—though not always direct access to—the beach. Leveraging projected growth to foster revitalization while respecting the neighborhood’s culture and history is the planning challenge. The Barrio is discussed at greater length in Chapter 6.

### Coastal Opportunities

Vacant and underutilized land along the city’s coast provides an opportunity to develop beach-oriented uses that support the city’s culture and beach community identity. New uses could be in the form of an active waterfront area, with restaurants, cafes and places to shop and linger, while taking in the view of the beach and views. Public uses, such as an amphitheater or park may also be appropriate.

Near downtown, there are scattered sites with potential for new small infill uses. As shown in Figure 2-7 in Chapter 2, this includes sites west of the railroad tracks, near the Coaster Station and along Carlsbad Boulevard. However, these sites are not directly along the water, which is walled off from most of the Village with a strip of residential uses. Where new waterfront development seems feasible, connections to the Village should be created (e.g. through provision of connected trails and direct physical and visual access to the beach). Additionally, access to popular areas such as the beach can be improved by replacing missing sidewalks and exploring new access routes.

Between Cannon Road and Aqua Hedionda Lagoon, there is potential for development on the San Diego Gas & Electric-owned property, designated as commercial in the current General Plan. To the west across the freeway, a land use study is underway to determine potential uses following the relocation of the power plant. Uses would need to be compatible with ongoing utility operations as well as the planned desalination plant, but beach-oriented and recreation uses could be appropriate. Further south, the proposed Ponto Beachfront Village Vision Plan identifies a range of uses, including hotels, residential uses, commercial, mixed use, and community amenities. The vision plan also seeks to improve circulation and streetscapes, and add open spaces and public art.

### Palomar Airport Road Corridor

The Palomar Airport Road corridor has seen many changes in recent years, with new employment uses, at somewhat higher intensities and the arrival of new uses, including technology firms and lab spaces. There are still many development sites remaining as well as older industrial office spaces that could be improved as needed for additional office and manufacturing space. While there are still a few vacant sites along Palomar Airport Road, many of the existing sites could accommodate new buildings through intensification of development. There are no residential uses along the road west of El Camino Real, and residential may not be an appropriate use, given the proximity to the airport and the size and context of the roadway.

This area could accommodate much of the city’s demand for research and development, office, and manufacturing facilities, capitalizing on the existing infrastructure and cluster of businesses. Access to McClellan-Palomar Airport provides an advantageous edge over other locations. This access is expected to improve further with California Pacific Airlines planning to expand service to the airport in summer 2011, providing nonstop service to destinations in California, Arizona and Nevada,

and, in a second phase, to Mexico.<sup>6</sup> The corridor's transportation infrastructure and agglomeration of industries and supportive services can help create a true employment center and destination.

Smaller tenant spaces in the area should be considered for services for daytime workers and central areas designated for a small plaza or park where employees can gather or eat lunch outside on a nice day. Increasing the potential to site personal services (e.g. dry cleaning, salons), other goods (e.g. office supplies, pharmacies) and lunch venues in the area, can reduce the necessity for employees to drive out of the area during the day, ease the hassle of running mid-day errands, and promote interactions among colleagues and even strangers. A more diverse range of businesses can create the interactions that are prized in more downtown working environments.

### El Camino Real

El Camino Real is currently the only major arterial that runs the length of the city, and projects a range of identities, as it alternates between commercial, office, industrial and residential frontage and undulating open spaces. Between and within these uses is the potential for new uses that can better link existing uses, provide retail services to local residents and engage potential customers who may be passing through the corridor. While much of the undeveloped land—and particularly steep slopes—will be retained as open space, at key intersections and other visible locations, development and redevelopment opportunities could be explored.



*This report identifies focus areas throughout the city that have opportunities for redevelopment or revitalization, including the Ponto area (top), the power plant site (middle), and sites along the city's major corridors, such as El Camino Real (bottom) and Palomar Airport Road.*

<sup>6</sup> California Pacific Airlines. "Palomar Airport to be Home to the New California Pacific Airlines." Accessed February 14, 2011 <<http://www.flycpair.com/news/newsPress.htm>>

## Site Availability/Development Needs “Match”

Working Paper #2 profiles land use demand according to demographic and employment trends. This section compares demand with supply: site availability profiled above with the estimated demand for various land uses. During the alternatives preparation and analysis in the next stage of the planning process, land use and locations will be further detailed and options explored. Several development projects are already in the planning stages to help accommodate some of this demand. Potential opportunity sites within the focus areas described above may be able to accommodate additional land needs to meet residential and commercial demand.

As stated in Chapter 2, single-family homes represent about 68 percent of the city’s current housing stock, while multi-family homes comprise 29 percent (the remaining are mobile homes). However, Working Paper #2 projects a shift in these proportions as the population ages. Many young (ages 20-34) and older households (age 65+) prefer multi-family residences for convenience, need or affordability. With this older population growing, Working Paper #2 predicts future growth in demand for multi-family housing. The Village and Barrio, currently the most walkable areas, with abundant services, are identified as the most desirable areas for these groups and for redevelopment potential. In total, this paper projects potential need for over 3,500 single-family units and nearly 2,400 multi-family units between 2010 and 2030. Potential opportunity sites described in Chapter 2 include 131 acres with General Plan designation of Medium-High or High-Density Residential. Assuming buildout at 11.5 and 19 units per acre for Medium-High or High-Density Residential, respectively, these sites could accommodate nearly 1,900 multi-family housing units. Likewise, potential opportunity sites classified as Low-, Low-Medium, and Medium-Density Residential total nearly 2,600 potential single-family units (assuming densities of 1, 3.2, and 6, respectively). These “back of the envelope” calculations suggest that the vacant and underutilized sites may be able to accommodate much, but not all, of residential

market demand. As described in Chapter 2, development projects could contribute another 1,000 housing units, bringing potential projects closer to expected demand. Notably, the Growth Management Plan limits the total number of dwelling units in the city to 54,600.

Working Paper #2 projects that continued growth in the biotechnology/biomedical, financial and green tech industries will continue to propel demand for office space. Approximately 1.8 million square feet of manufacturing/light industrial space and 2.1 million square feet of business park/office space may be needed by 2040. Working Paper #2 also projects retail demand of 764,000 square feet through 2030. Potential opportunity sites described in Chapter 2 of this paper include 664 acres with General Plan designation of Office or Planned Industrial could accommodate up to 4.8 million square feet of space. (This assumes an FAR of 0.15 for underutilized sites, which already contain uses that might continue, and 0.25 for vacant sites.) The city currently captures the majority of the greater market area’s sales of apparel and automobiles. Building materials, home furnishings, appliances and food stores represent retail opportunity types where the city lags compared to the market area as a whole. In addition to these projects, new residents, workers and visitors will place additional demands on the city’s existing public infrastructure—parks, schools and cultural resources. The General Plan will explore requisite expansion of these types of facilities (consistent with the Growth Management Plan, as described in Section 2.3) to ensure that current and future community members can continue to enjoy Carlsbad’s high quality of life.

# Carlsbad Village Neighborhood Preservation and Revitalization



Carlsbad Village is one of the oldest and most walkable neighborhoods in the city. The neighborhood is home to the majority of Carlsbad's historic and cultural resources, including the Carlsbad Theatre, Old Santa Fe Train Depot, Army Navy Academy and multiple historic homes and hotels. The Village also has several entertainment venues, in addition to many unique restaurant options and boutiques that attract both visitors and residents throughout the year. Given its historic charm, enticing retail destinations, beach access, ample sidewalks and proximity to transit and the freeway, Carlsbad Village is a key gathering place in the city.

However, only a portion of the Village actually serves as a destination for the city; the remainder of the 215-acre neighborhood is home to residential, institutional and local commercial and service uses. Thus, the Village maintains a dual role as a citywide and regional visitor destination, as well as a self-sufficient, functional neighborhood. This dual role of the Village is expressed not only in its varied land uses, but also in its overall character and design. This chapter provides an overview of the Village in terms of its land uses and development scale, walkability and functionality as a neighborhood, and its key destinations and gateways. These elements play a critical role in how the Village can evolve over time as a key destination in the city but also as a mature and attractive neighborhood in which to live and work.

Many of the ideas discussed in this chapter are already illustrated in City's the Village Master Plan and Design Manual. The Plan is the official statement of design and land use policy for the Village. It envisions the Village accommodating a range of uses and serving as a specialty retail center for the city, projecting a distinct identity within the



*The Village has a distinct character that reflects Carlsbad's history and small beach town vibe.*



*Retail and professional uses in the Village focus on the city's visitor economy.*



*Development scale throughout the Village is modest, with most buildings no more than two stories.*

city and region. It identifies the core “heart” of the Village Center and several support areas, each of which emphasizes a specialized land use function while containing a mix of uses appropriate to the urban village environment. Development standards are documented for each of the districts. The accompanying Design Manual is intended to assist project applicants in carrying out projects consistent with the Plan’s vision. The Plan will continue to guide development in the Village after the General Plan update, but may be amended, if necessary, to ensure consistency with the General Plan.

## 5.1 Neighborhood Context and Scale

Carlsbad Village is situated on the northwestern edge of the city, just south of Buena Vista Lagoon and along the Pacific Ocean. The neighborhood is bounded by Laguna Drive and Carlsbad Boulevard to the north, Ocean Street to the west, Oak Avenue and the Barrio Neighborhood to the south and I-5 to the east. The San Diego Northern Railroad line runs through the western portion of the Village, creating a significant barrier to east-west connectivity in the northern and southern portions of the neighborhood. Figure 5-1 shows the overall structure of the Village, including major physical elements, land use and key activity centers.

### Land Use Context

Carlsbad Village is primarily defined by commercial uses, from visitor-oriented shopping, restaurants and hotels in the core and near the beach, to auto service and repair, banks and professional offices, and shopping centers throughout the rest of the area. These uses line many of the major streets in the neighborhood and thus constitute much of the everyday experience of the Village. Altogether, commercial uses comprise over half (54 percent) of the developable area in the Village. Residential uses constitute 22 percent of development in the Village, with an even mix of single family and multifamily residences interspersed throughout the neighborhood. Educational and institutional uses, including the Army Navy Academy and several



religious institutions comprise another 12 percent of developable land, with the remaining 12 percent comprising recreation and open space, transportation facilities, industrial uses, and vacant land.

The core of Village activity for shopping, entertainment and cultural entertainment for visitors and residents is currently located in the area between Beech Avenue to the north and Oak Avenue to the south, and between Carlsbad Boulevard and Harding Street to the west and east. Both Carlsbad Boulevard (north and south) and Carlsbad Village Drive (east and west) are main thoroughfares through the Village. Both State Street and Carlsbad Boulevard also play a significant role in the Village. Altogether, these areas define the primary experience for most visitors and include most of the cultural, shopping and entertainment destinations. For the most part, uses throughout the remainder of the Village are a mix of residential and commercial. These uses are often juxtaposed—such as single-family residences next to small commercial centers, or multifamily dwellings adjacent to car repair shops or professional offices. This co-location of uses is common throughout the Village, both in the center of activity, as well as throughout the neighborhood.

Parking in the Village is generally on-site, on surface parking lots for larger developments and on-street or in garages for individual residences. However, for pedestrian-oriented retail areas, parking is a mix of on-street parking and public parking on large surface lots. These public surface lots are located along the rail line, behind development on State and Roosevelt streets; they serve the Coaster Station, State Street and nearby shops on Carlsbad Village Drive. If consolidated into a single structure, these sites may offer opportunity for new development in the heart of the Village.

## Development Scale

The Village's mix and juxtaposition of uses reflect its organic growth over time and results in a casual, unassuming, yet charming quality that defines its small, beach-town character. Similarly, the scale of development throughout the Village also demonstrates this modest quality, with one- and two-story buildings comprising the majority of development

within the neighborhood. Taller three- and a limited number four-story uses are located primarily west of Carlsbad Boulevard, where views to the ocean are emphasized due to the higher elevation and proximity to the beach. This area is characterized by many larger developments that, aside from the Army Navy Academy and several churches, are beach-oriented—including high density residential uses such as the Carlsbad by the Sea Retirement Community and beach resorts and hotels.

The development scale throughout the remainder of the Village, east of Carlsbad Boulevard, represents a range between small- and medium-scaled developments. This includes commercial strip centers, banks and professional buildings on medium to large lots, as well as single-family houses, multifamily buildings and retail and service uses on small lots; often, these variously-scaled developments are located adjacent to one another and entail dramatic differences in development and building typology. Larger-lot uses typically include surface parking and are set back further from the street while smaller-lot uses have either small setbacks for residential or service commercial uses, or are adjacent to the sidewalk such as retail shops, restaurants and higher density residential or mixed-use development. While the organic character of the Village tends to embrace this diversity, in some places the difference in scale and development typology disrupts the area's continuity.

Figure 5-2 describes some of the key physical challenges and opportunities within the Village that will affect how the area is revitalized.

Figure 5-1: Village Neighborhood Form

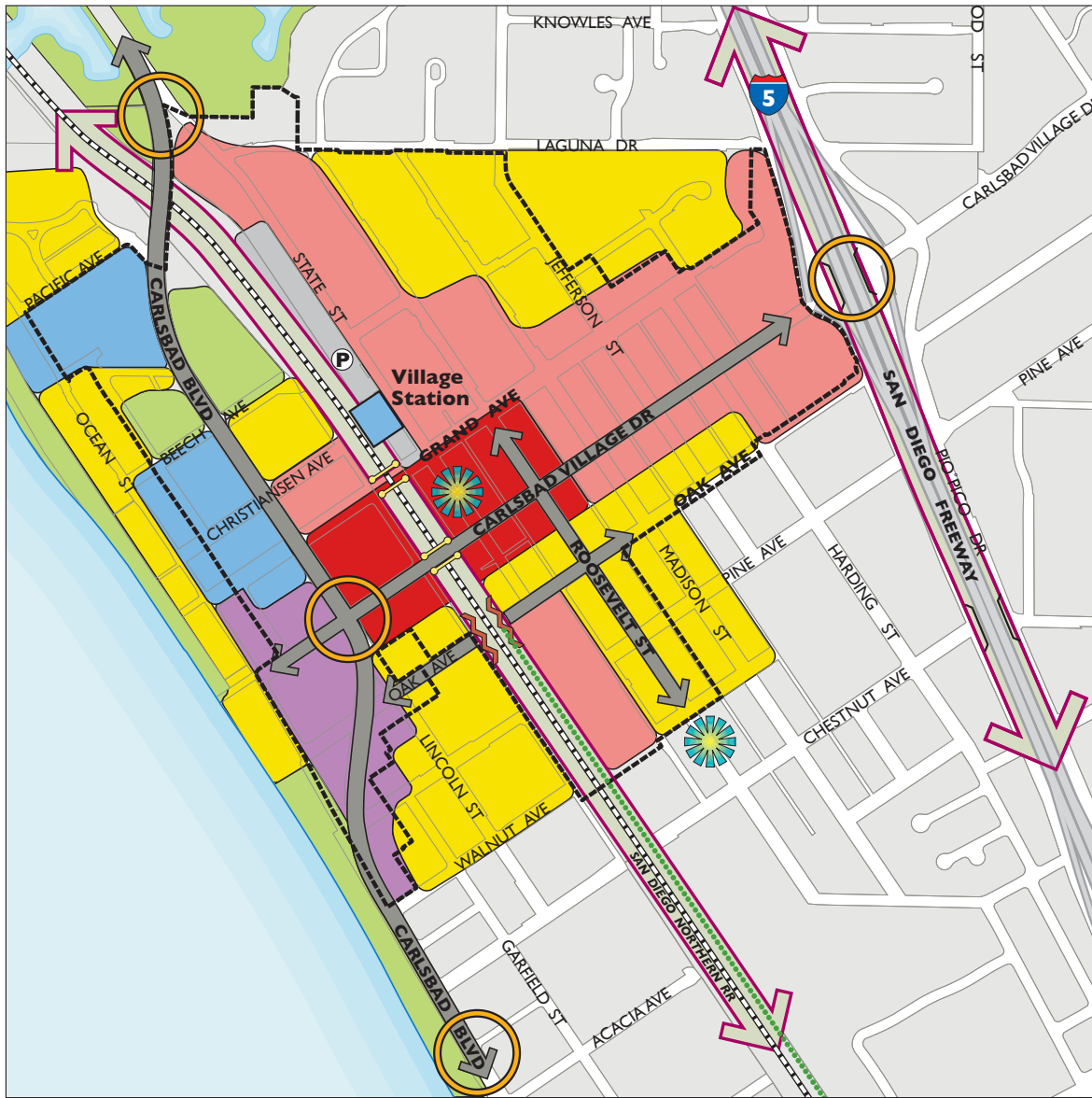


Figure 5-2: Carlsbad Village Opportunities and Challenges



**1** Views to the ocean should be enhanced and preserved wherever possible, such as along Carlsbad Village Drive. This could include signage, reorientation of the street, or wider sidewalks to preserve view corridors.



**2** Existing vacant sites such as this one along Christiansen Way may accommodate new open space or infill development designed to extend an active and pleasant pedestrian realm throughout the Village.



**3** A centralized parking structure behind State Street could provide more opportunity for development on current surface parking lots.



**4** State Street is an active pedestrian destination that loses appeal north of Grand Avenue where the building-to-street relationship could be improved by a greater focus on fenestration, entries, awnings, outdoor activities and streetscape at the pedestrian level.



**5** Roosevelt Street north of Carlsbad Village Drive is dominated by surface parking lots. However, strategic infill could build on its ample trees, kitschy building character and active outdoor uses help to enliven the street environment.



**6** Sidewalks are not continuous throughout the Village, as shown along Madison Street north of Grand Avenue. The sidewalk network should be completed to improve walkability.



**7** Smaller scale lots interspersed among larger consolidated parcels pose a challenge for redevelopment and continuity of character.



**8** Portions of Grand Avenue have a well-defined and attractive streetscape with large trees and businesses that front the street edge. This building-to-street relationship could be extended along the rest of the street.



**9** Development scale is a mix throughout the Village such as along Madison Street, where small commercial centers set back by surface parking are juxtaposed with smaller residential and commercial uses located at the street edge.



**10** The corner of State Street and Carlsbad Village Drive should be defined as a gateway through building design and placement with emphasis on the pedestrian realm.



**11** Buildings along Carlsbad Village Drive are set back from the street by parking or landscape buffers. Bringing development close to the street will create a continuous promenade of buildings along the Village's main entrance.



**12** Street trees, pavement materials, lighting and signage along Carlsbad Village Drive should be consistent to reinforce the Village as a destination and representation of small-town Carlsbad.



**13** Retail buildings set back from Carlsbad Village Drive by a large surface parking lot is inconsistent with a small town environment characterized by zero setbacks and street-oriented buildings.



**14** Carlsbad Boulevard acts as a wide vehicle thoroughfare and perceived barrier. Signalized pedestrian crossings or narrower road width could improve perceived walkability in the Village.



**15** The distinction of the edge of the Village is not clear, particularly where residential uses are interspersed with commercial uses as along Roosevelt and Jefferson streets to the south.



**16** Currently, pedestrian access does not connect across the railroad. New pedestrian access across the railroad at key locations could allow residents and visitors direct link to parks, retail uses and the beach.



Village Boundary  
 Railroad and Station

Source: City of Carlsbad, 2011; SANDAG, 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011



## 5.2 Walkability and Neighborhood Function

A walkable neighborhood is defined by the availability, safety and ease of connections between key destinations. Residents and workers should feel that walking to key services and amenities is an easy option, and that walking trips are safe, short and interesting. This section examines the degree to which the Village provides a walkable and functional neighborhood environment, where residents, workers and visitors are connected to key destinations and the overall mix and location of uses support these pedestrian connections.

### Physical Connections

Carlsbad Village is organized by a gridded street network that extends roughly from Laguna Drive to the north to Oak Avenue and Walnut Avenue to the south. The most walkable area of the Village is between Grand Avenue and Oak Avenue, where blocks are roughly 350 feet by 430 feet with central north-south alleyways. Connections in this area can easily be made, particularly for those on foot who are moving between destinations along Carlsbad Village Drive, State Street and Carlsbad Boulevard, as well as to the Barrio Neighborhood to the south along Roosevelt and Madison streets. The northern portion of the neighborhood, however, is less walkable, with fewer cross-streets, particularly between Roosevelt and Madison streets. The lack of continuous sidewalks in this area (along Madison Street) may also limit walkability and access. Walkability is further hampered by the rail corridor, with the only crossings located at Carlsbad Boulevard to the north and Grand Avenue to the south.

East-west connections to the beach from the Village can also use improvements. Primary access on foot is along Carlsbad Village Drive, with additional connections along Grand Avenue and Carlsbad Boulevard. Views to the water from Carlsbad Boulevard and Grand Avenue are only available west of Carlsbad Boulevard as a change in elevation blocks views from lower elevations to the east. These views are not expansive, as they are partially obstructed by residences oriented to the beach along Ocean Street. Physical connections



*Portions of the Village are highly walkable (top), while other connections could be improved to ensure safety and convenience (middle). Views to the ocean from the center of the Village are blocked by changes in elevation (bottom).*

are also modest, with narrow connections down to the beach on stairs with minimal signs and hazard warnings. Additionally, active uses that would enhance walkability and access to the beach end abruptly at Carlsbad Boulevard without formal linkage to the beach. Future efforts to create new waterfront developments along Carlsbad Boulevard could link existing active uses and provide physical and visual connections to the beach in a more celebratory manner.

### Nighborhood Functionality

Despite this lack of east-west connectivity within the neighborhood and to the beach, the overall functionality of the Village is not lost. North-south connections to the heart of the Village between Grand and Oak avenues allow most residents and workers to easily access key services and amenities in the neighborhood. Uses west of the rail corridor are more insular, as they include institutional, residential and hotel uses that are not daily destinations for Village occupants. Even within the heart of the Village, the area west of the rail corridor is more visitor-oriented with fewer key services for local residents and workers. Though the Village is currently not a major location for residences, it has the potential to add residents, particularly seniors and young families that tend to prefer walking access to shops and services. Additionally, the area's proximity to the beach, parks, transit, schools and residential amenities make it an ideal place for future residents. As the Village continues to evolve and intensify, it will be important to consider the overall functionality of the neighborhood—if new residents are located west of the rail corridor, for instance, the new population will need to have access to services within easy walking distance.

Likewise, it will be important to ensure that all new development and revitalization of existing development in the Village supports and enhances the neighborhood's overall walkability and functionality. Ensuring that new developments—especially those that consolidate smaller parcels—provide physical connections to existing streets and pedestrian pathways will be essential for maintaining a walkable infrastructure and promoting interaction among community members. Community

events, like the farmers' market, provide opportunities for residents and visitors to shop and mingle. However, existing developments such as the Village Plaza shopping center on the eastern edge of the Village typify the insular car-oriented development typology that negates walkability and connections to surrounding uses—these types of developments should be discouraged. Additionally, existing developments should examine opportunities to create and foster pedestrian connections to surrounding development, particularly to residential areas. Enhancing the Village's walkability will reinforce its small-town beach character and create a neighborhood that functions for visitors, residents and workers.

### 5.3 Gateways and Destinations

While the Village is a fully functioning neighborhood, it is also a destination for visitors and Carlsbad residents outside of the Village. For these visitors, the primary experience of the Village is along Carlsbad Village Drive, State Street, Grand Avenue and Carlsbad Boulevard. These streetscapes and their built environment play an important role in defining the character and visual quality of the Village. They serve as the gateway and destination for most visitors, and comprise the majority of entertainment, cultural and restaurant activities in the Village. This section examines these key gateways and destinations within the Village and identifies opportunities for focused improvements.

#### Carlsbad Village Drive

Carlsbad Village Drive is the primary entrance into the Village from I-5, and thus acts as a gateway into the neighborhood, welcoming visitors into Carlsbad's slower-paced beach-town core. The streetscape along the street is pleasant, with continuous street trees, sidewalks with brick paving accents and a well-landscaped median. The street also includes pedestrian-oriented lighting, transit stops and well-defined crossings. However, the street design tends to favor vehicle traffic, with limited facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Sidewalks, although improved, are somewhat

narrow for a downtown village and sometimes obstructed by landscaping, utilities and driveways, and bicycle lanes are not provided. Improvement of these facilities—wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, curb extensions at pedestrian crossings and pedestrian-scaled street furniture and lighting—would help underline this entrance into the Village as both a local and regional conduit, particularly for those who might choose to walk or bike into the neighborhood. In addition, there may be an opportunity to further underline Carlsbad Village Drive as a gateway through distinctive signage, way-finding and public art elements that highlight the Village's key attractions, historic locations and neighborhood identity.

The built environment along Carlsbad Village Drive comprises much of the more recent development in the Village, with buildings that date from the 1970s and 80s to today. Development scale ranges from larger-scale shopping centers with surface parking lots fronting the street to small, pedestrian-oriented retail shops that hug the edge of the sidewalk. While the continuous landscaping along the street helps to occupy the space in between buildings, the street edge is still discontinuous, particularly east of Roosevelt Street. Where buildings are located close to the sidewalk, west of Roosevelt Street, the somewhat narrow sidewalk and minimal pedestrian facilities result in a greater emphasis on the wide street between, detracting from the perception of safety and comfort for pedestrians who frequent these uses. Wider sidewalks, as well as building awnings for shade, would help underline this portion of Carlsbad Village Drive as a pedestrian destination and foster community connectedness.

Creating a stronger building-to-street relationship should be considered as a future primary focus of improvements along Carlsbad Village Drive. In particular, creating a continuous promenade of development at the street edge would help define the street as a key gateway and defining feature of the Village. Higher intensity development at key locations, with accentuated building massing, such as at State Street would help identify key destinations and pedestrian activity zones. Addressing the building-to-street relationship for existing properties or those not likely to redevelop could also be

accomplished by employing landscaping and built elements, such as trellises or colonnades, that would carry the rhythm of built form across parking lots and other breaks in development along the street.

### State Street

State Street serves as the focus of activity in the Village, with a variety of cultural, entertainment, shopping and restaurant uses. The streetscape along some portions of State Street is defined by continuous street trees and wide sidewalks, with angled street parking and narrow travel lanes. Landscape planters, outdoor seating areas and mid-block pedestrian crossings emphasize the pedestrian orientation of the street. Pedestrian-scaled lighting and more opportunities for outdoor uses where sidewalks are narrower would further improve the area as a pedestrian destination.

Along State Street, the pedestrian environment between Carlsbad Village Drive and Grand Avenue is highly successful, with sidewalks that accommodate seating areas, benches and street trees. Buildings of varied ages and one to two stories line the sidewalk edge with large floor to ceiling windows and ample awnings for shade. Between Grand Avenue and Beech Street, the pedestrian-oriented building-to-street relationship begins to break down as uses are variably pulled back from the street and have limited fenestration, awnings and outdoor uses. Infill opportunities could focus on bringing development to the street edge and establishing a strong relationship with the street with ample windows, entries, awnings and pedestrian amenities and uses.

### Carlsbad Boulevard

Like Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad Boulevard acts as a gateway into the Village from surrounding areas. The boulevard generally provides two travel lanes in each direction through the extent of the Village, with continuous bike lanes and sidewalks and intermittent parallel parking on both sides of the street. Landscaping includes a planted median/turn lane and street trees. Although an attractive boulevard, it lacks a defined streetscape scheme to



*Carlsbad Village Drive provides an active street edge in the center of the Village (top). State Street is an attractive and active pedestrian zone close to Carlsbad Village Drive (middle). The street wall along Carlsbad Boulevard is well-defined only in the center of the Village (bottom).*

define one's arrival into the Village and to enhance the street's identity and role within the neighborhood, particularly as distinct from the role of the boulevard as it passes through other neighborhoods, or as it leaves the city. Village enhancements may include streetscape treatments such as way-finding signage or landscape design elements that distinguish this part of Carlsbad Boulevard from other segments.

Beyond the streetscape, the built environment along Carlsbad Boulevard denotes Carlsbad's beach-town character, with a mix of hotel and mixed-use commercial and residential developments located along the edge of the street. Buildings are located generally close to the sidewalk, usually set back with a narrow yet lush landscaped buffer. Buildings edge the street with a pedestrian orientation between Carlsbad Village Drive and Grand Avenue; to the north, the street is edged by a mix of parking lots, mixed-use buildings and landscaping. Focusing on infill of parking lots and redevelopment of older uses in this area in particular would help improve the perception of continuity along the street.



# 6 Barrio Neighborhood Preservation and Revitalization

Established in the 1920s, the Barrio neighborhood first served as a residential enclave for new immigrants supporting the agriculture economy of the city. Today, the Barrio reflects elements of its past in its many cultural markers and historic buildings, as well as in its long-time residents and cohesive community. As the city evolves over the next 20 years, it will be important to define clear parameters for improvements and new development in the Barrio that will honor community desires for change and preservation.

This chapter reviews existing conditions in the Barrio neighborhood, including development and streetscape characteristics; as well as planning efforts to date. A community workshop focused on the Barrio neighborhood in particular is scheduled for March 10, 2011, but not in time to incorporate into this paper. Although this chapter does not include perspectives of local residents beyond what was shared during Phase 1 of Envision Carlsbad, following the workshop a separate document will be prepared that summarizes the meeting.

## 6.1 Neighborhood Context and Scale

The roughly 150-acre Barrio neighborhood is situated on the northwestern portion of the city, just south of Carlsbad Village. The neighborhood is bounded by I-5 to the east and the railroad tracks to west; Tamarack Avenue, an arterial along which traffic moves quickly, provides a strong southern edge. The northern edge of the neighborhood is somewhat amorphous: while from a planning perspective the Barrio extends up to the Village planning boundary to Oak and Walnut



*The Barrio is primarily a residential neighborhood with a small amount of neighborhood serving commercial uses.*



Community members have proposed to create a permanent Barrio Museum to celebrate the neighborhood.



Development scale in the Barrio ranges from single family homes to multiple-story structures in large parcels, such as the Public Storage facility.

avenues, boundaries between the two areas are not distinctive.

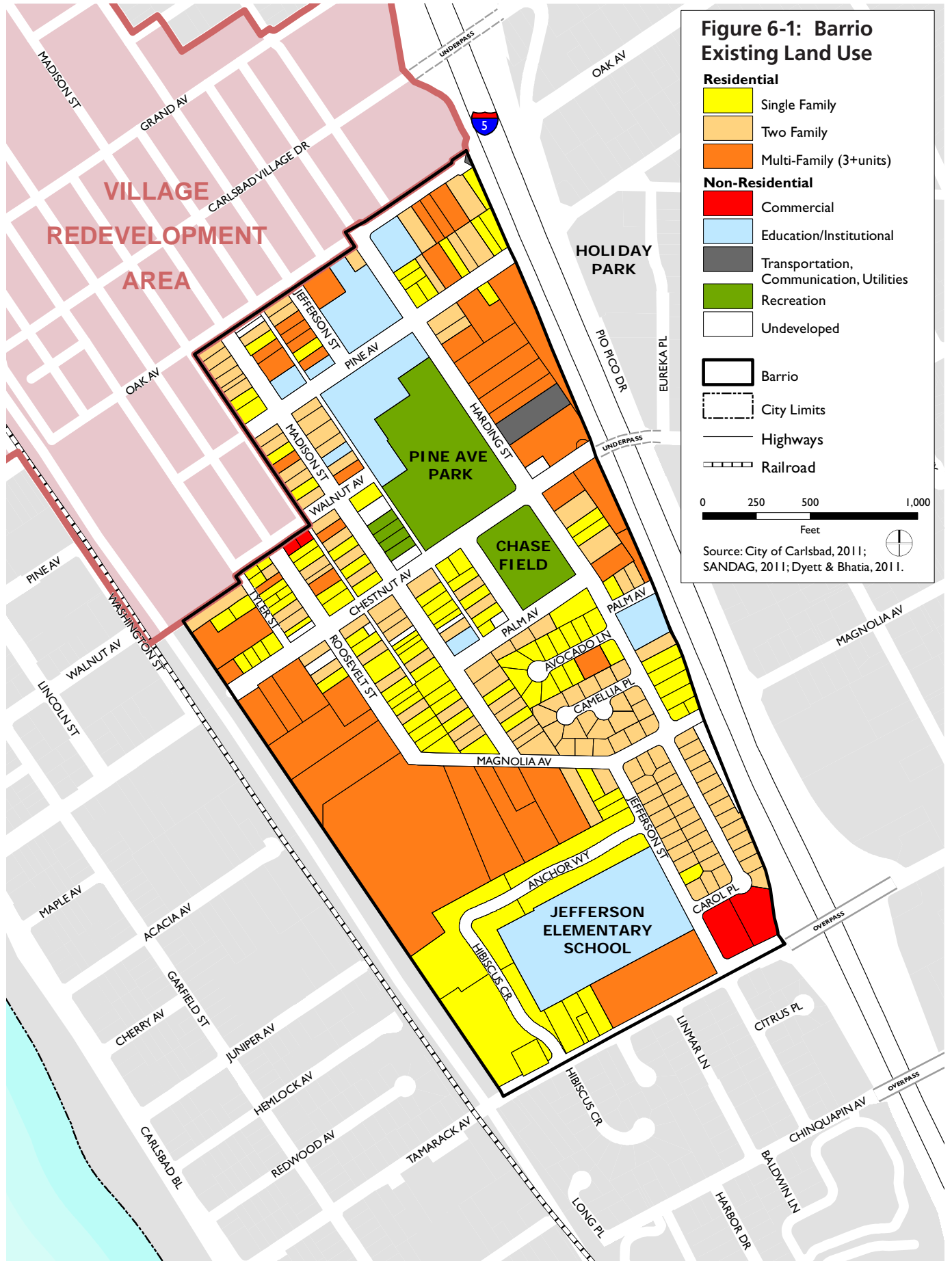
One of the focus areas in the Barrio is the new Pine Avenue Park and Chase Field, as well as the adjacent senior center. The corner of Walnut Avenue and Roosevelt Street is also a focus area and contains several cultural markers, including Lola’s Market, the only local store and tacqueria serving the area, although technically it is just outside the Barrio planning area. There is community interest in rehabilitating several of the buildings in this area to create a permanent “Barrio Museum” according to the property owners, as well as to celebrate the house where Victor Villasenor, author of the nationally acclaimed best-seller *Rain of Gold*, was born and lived.

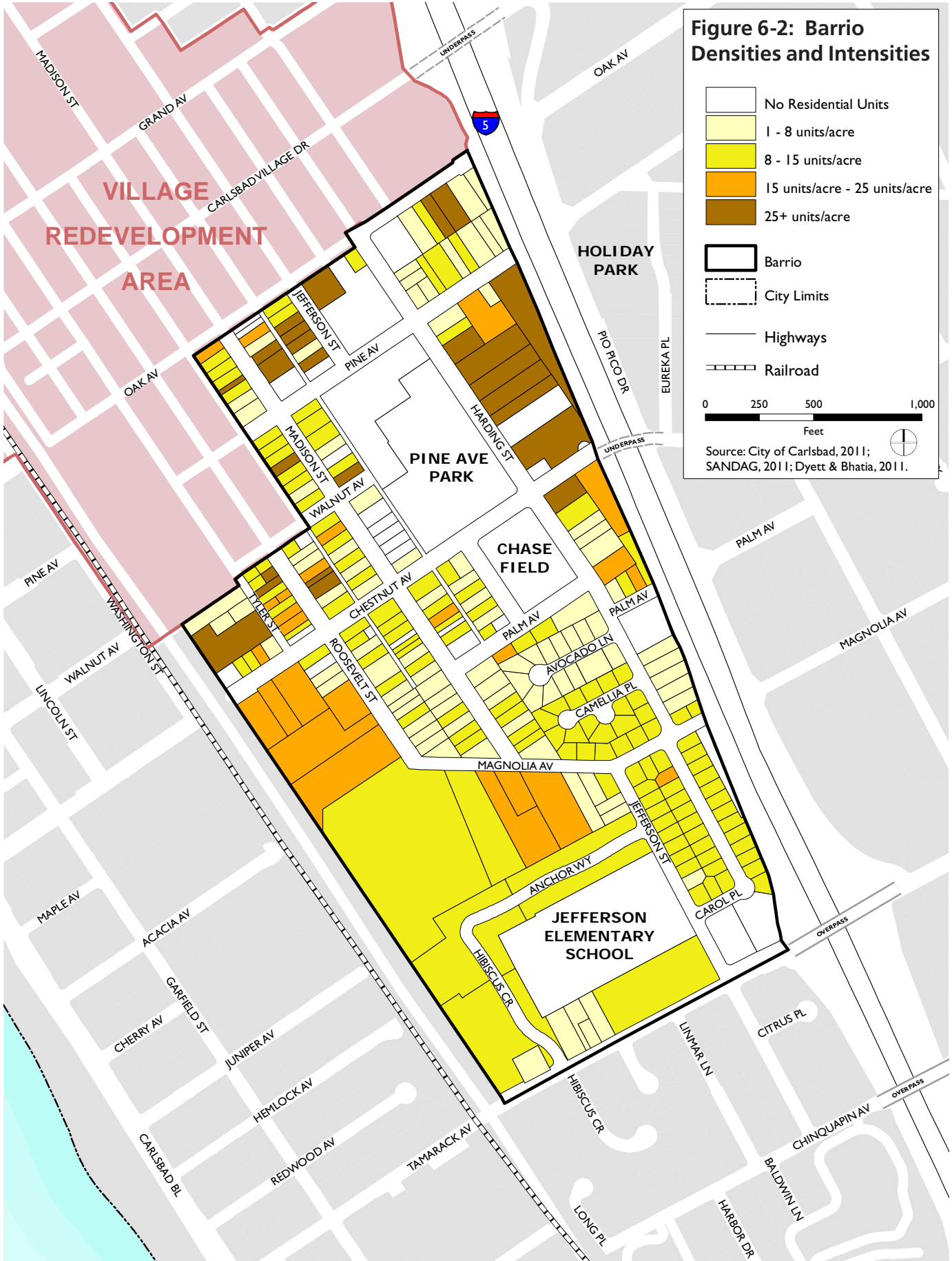
### Land Use Context

Land use in the Barrio neighborhood is primarily residential, comprising approximately 75 percent of the developable land in the area, as shown in Figure 6-1. The neighborhood has mostly small lot single-family/duplex homes that face the street and encourage interaction among neighbors. These homes constitute the heart of the neighborhood along Roosevelt and Madison streets, while higher density residential development is located to the southwest and east along Magnolia Avenue and Harding Street. Public, institutional, and recreation uses comprise much of the remaining land in the Barrio, while commercial uses are limited—located primarily at the corner of Tamarack Avenue and I-5 and constituting a gas station and a few stores.

### Development Scale

The neighborhood is fairly heterogeneous in its development character, and buildings are of varied vintage. North of Chestnut Avenue, the neighborhood is laid out along a gridded network of streets that extend into the Village. Buildings in this part of the Barrio are generally older than those in the south. Lot sizes and housing densities are extremely varied, as shown in Figure 6-2. Lot and building sizes are generally small along Roosevelt and Madison streets—the area where many of





the homes are also older. Low-rise multifamily buildings and developments are concentrated west of Magnolia Avenue, and between Harding Street and I-5. Duplexes and townhomes are scattered in many locations, including several concentrations in the southeast. Buildings are of a variety of styles, reflecting their age—from simple early wooden bungalows, to Modern apartment buildings constructed in the 1960s that are showing their age, as well as an eclectic collection of historical styles. While most buildings are one to two stories tall, there are several three story buildings, and densities can be exceptionally high, up to 62 units per acre—exceeding those currently allowed by the General Plan, and thus non-conforming due to density or other development standards.

## 6.2 Walkability and Neighborhood Function

### Physical Connections

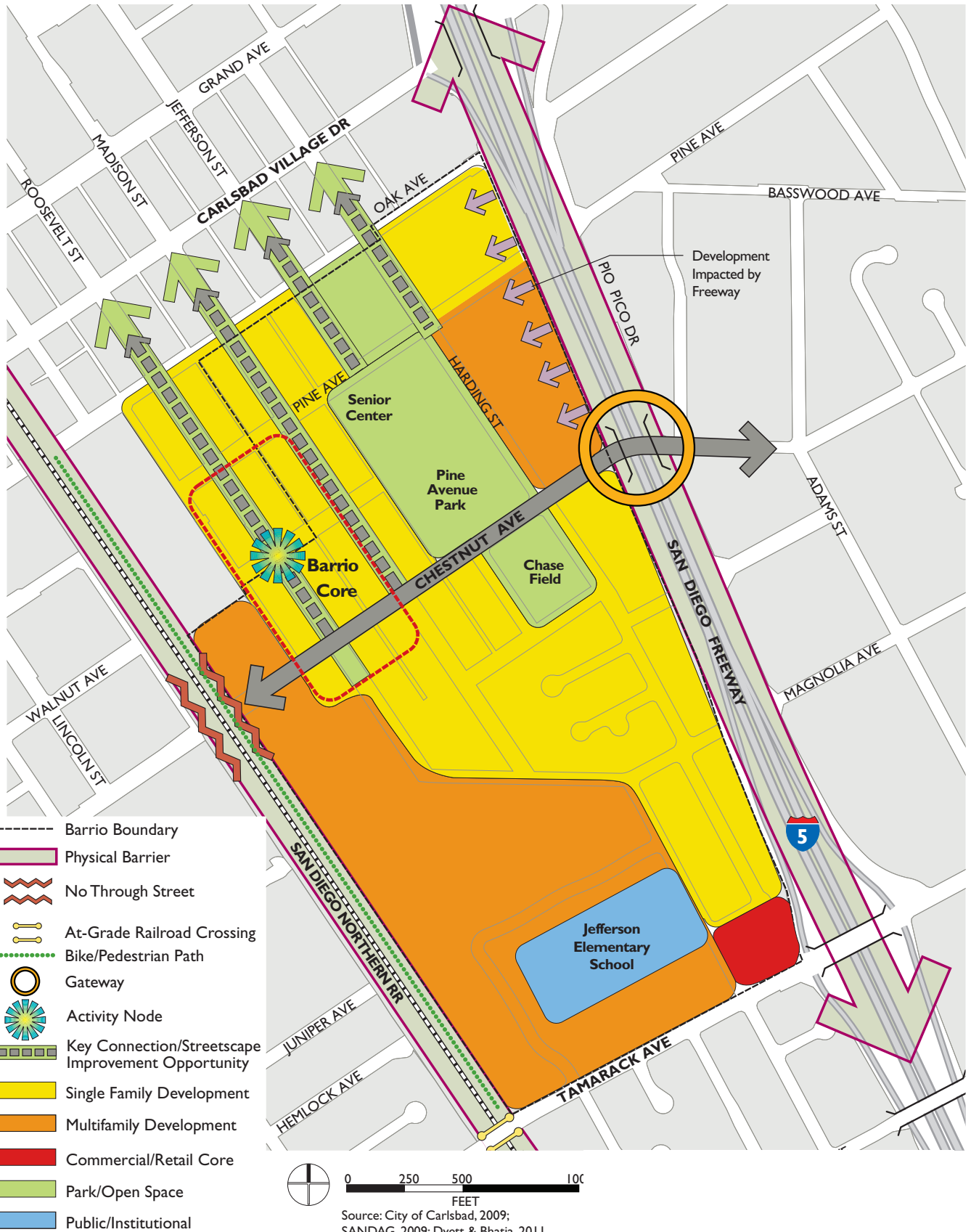
Figure 6-3 illustrates the Barrio's structure and connectivity. On a daily basis, children, families, and other residents can be seen walking to school, parks, community facilities and other destinations. The grid pattern of streets and shorter blocks of 250 feet by 440 feet allow for good circulation on the north side of the neighborhood. The southern portion has a more introverted street pattern, with some cul-de-sacs and a looping network of streets. Because of the larger block sizes, this area is not as well-connected within or to the surroundings.

The Barrio has excellent north-south connectivity to the Village through the gridded network of streets, but access to the rest of the city is limited due to the train tracks and freeway. Tamarack Avenue and Carlsbad Village Drive are the only connections west over the train tracks to the beach, leaving the entire Barrio neighborhood devoid of connections across the rail corridor. The Barrio community has expressed desire for a pedestrian connection at the western end of Chestnut Avenue across the railroad—whether at grade, below or above—to provide direct access to the beach. To the east across I-5, Chestnut Avenue provides one



*The Barrio is home to several recreation amenities that emphasize walking, including Chase Field, the Senior Center, and the rail trail.*

Figure 6-3: Barrio Neighborhood Form



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2009; SANDAG, 2009; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011

additional connection—and a critical one—to Holiday Park and the neighborhood’s middle and high schools, as well as the Library Learning Center and Centro de Informacion.

## Streetscapes

In general, streets in the Barrio are too wide for the amount of traffic they carry. With the exception of Chestnut Avenue and some streets that feed to it, streets serve primarily local traffic and have one lane of traffic in either direction. Several streets, such as Hibiscus Circle, have consistently planted street trees; however, most streets are bereft of street trees. While most streets have sidewalks, some sidewalks are discontinuous or narrow, and a few streets lack them. The City has spent considerable efforts in recent years improving streets in the area, including undergrounding utilities; however, many streets still have overhead utilities.

Looking ahead, the Barrio’s character could benefit from strategic streetscape enhancements: consistent street trees and other streetscape improvements, especially on the linkages to the Village; planted medians where feasible; potentially a roundabout at Roosevelt Street and Walnut Avenue and perhaps other intersections, providing focus to the cultural elements; and improved bikeway and pedestrian linkages, especially to the trails along the railroad.

## Neighborhood Functionality

The Barrio neighborhood has a strong community identity and an active residential population. Figure 6-4 shows land uses, opportunities, and challenges in the Barrio. As residential uses comprise the majority of uses in the Barrio, it is the activities and needs of its residents that dictate how the neighborhood functions. The Barrio has several key elements of a good neighborhood, including ample park and play space, community centers, and an elementary school, all of which provide key community services and gathering space. However, the neighborhood lacks in neighborhood-serving retail uses, aside from the Village Plaza and Lola’s Market (both are just outside of the planning boundary); this necessitates residents leave the neighborhood

for most conveniences and services from shopping to dry cleaning, or a quick bite to eat. Additionally, higher density residential areas, where most residents are focused in the community, are even further removed from daily activity and services in the Village by the lack of easy access and connectivity to surrounding areas.

There are several key elements that could improve the functionality of the Barrio as a neighborhood—the most primary being access to retail that serves everyday needs. Existing activity centers, such as at Walnut Avenue and Roosevelt Street, in the heart of the Barrio, could be expanded to include more retail options while still preserving the cultural and historical qualities of the area. Additionally, connections to surrounding development, such as to the beach should be explored as a necessary improvement. However, connections should be strategic, and developed in concert with access to key services where none currently exist—whether these are within the Barrio or just outside.

## 6.3 Recent Planning Efforts

The Barrio’s organic growth over time and resulting eclectic neighborhood fabric pose a challenging planning framework, in that community interests are diverse and sometimes opposing, and common goals and a vision for the neighborhood are hard to establish. Several planning efforts have been conducted for the Barrio, as described below. These efforts and their recommendations serve as a basis for understanding past community concerns and desires, and are described below.

### Draft Barrio Specific Plan (1995)

At the request of Barrio residents, the Barrio Specific Plan was drafted by the city in 1995 following two years of planning analysis and community outreach, including stakeholder interviews, a community tour, workshops, and open houses. However, the Barrio Specific Plan was not adopted by the City Council. The draft plan divides the neighborhood into five planning areas, each of which exemplifies unique characteristics. For example, the oldest part of the Barrio (along

Madison Street) is one planning area, which is characterized by small lot single-family homes, duplexes, and small apartments in a range of architectural styles.

The draft plan provides goals and policies for land use, such as promoting compatible uses and a transition buffer between the Village and Barrio. It segments housing policies into three categories: promoting owner-occupation of units to reduce absentee landlord impacts, encouraging housing rehabilitation to improve structural and visual conditions; and improving affordability of rental housing to reduce overcrowding and the cost burden of housing. Development standards and policies seek to maintain existing densities and single-family character. Other policies include improving streetscapes and pedestrian safety (e.g. adding crosswalks and public art), adding entry markers to signify entrance into this unique neighborhood, and instituting neighborhood improvement programs (e.g. graffiti removal, abandoned vehicle abatement, etc.).

### Draft Colonia District Master Plan (2007)

The Colonia District Master Plan (prepared by a private party) proposes policies and standards for land use, design, and development in the Colonia District (otherwise known as the Barrio neighborhood). The District is generally bounded by Oak Avenue to the north, I-5 to the east, Carol Place and Anchor Way to the south, and the railroad line and Madison Street (from Walnut Avenue northward) to the west. This master plan is in the draft stage, has not been submitted to the city as a formal application and has not been adopted.

The Colonia District Master Plan cites that the city's development standards are successful in suburban portions of the city, but do not apply well to the Colonia District. In response, the plan proposes a new zoning district and a partnership between landowners and the city to provide incentives to developers/property owners to revitalize the neighborhood. These incentives include: allowing higher densities to increase economic opportunities and the vibrancy of the neighborhood; providing

community improvements, such as a connection on Chestnut Avenue across the rail line and a greater mix of uses to allow neighborhood-serving retail; and establishing more flexible design standards (e.g. revisiting setbacks, heights, and parking requirements). Like the 1995 Draft Barrio Specific Plan, the Colonia District Master Plan envisions distinct planning areas within the district, each of which proposes allowed and conditional uses, and appropriate development standards.

### 2009 Housing Element Update

The Barrio represents a critical part of the City's strategies to meet its regional housing needs allocation and state law. According to the City's most recent Housing Element, vacant and underutilized sites with the potential for redevelopment at below-market rates are concentrated in the Carlsbad Village Redevelopment Area and the Barrio neighborhood. The Housing Element includes a specific program that identifies potential for 330 new units in the Barrio, as a result of redevelopment of aging structures, homes in disrepair due to absentee landlords, and/or locations where the structure value is less than the land value. The Barrio is identified as ideally located next to major transportation, shopping and recreation, but with a substantial number of older, underutilized properties with high absentee ownership, that may be appropriate for redevelopment. The Housing Element envisions that a future master or specific plan would establish a new or unique land use designation for the neighborhood that permits higher densities in excess of the current RMH and RH land use designations, which permit a maximum of 15 and 23 units per acre, respectively.



Figure 6-4: Barrio Opportunities and Challenges



(1) Carlsbad Senior Center and (2) the playground at Pine Avenue Park



Historic commercial building



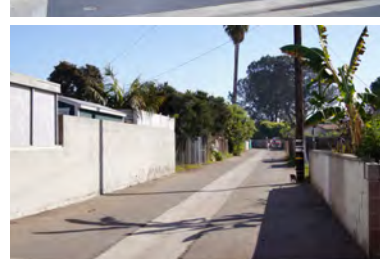
(4) Lola's (left) and "Barrio Museum" (right) at Roosevelt Street and Walnut Avenue. (5) Ramirez House was built in 1918 by one of the first families who moved into the Barrio.



(6) Fences at Chestnut Avenue terminus at railroad tracks. (7) Dedicated bike path and trails along the railroad from Tamarack Avenue to Carlsbad Village Drive in the Village. (8) Older apartment project on approximately nine acres, with density of ten units per acre.



Alley between residential properties



Source: City of Carlsbad, 2011; SANDAG, 2011; Dyett & Bhatia, 2011



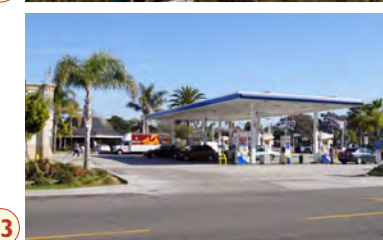
Housing density varies from single family homes to higher density structures such as this apartment building.



Freeway underpass at Chestnut Avenue



Senior affordable apartment building built to 75 units per acre located between Tyler Street and the railroad.



Retail use within the Barrio neighborhood



Landscaped medians and street trees along Tamarack Avenue



Single-family attached homes along Magnolia Avenue



Most roads are wide, without consistent street trees and some with utility poles overhead.



Gaus House, a bungalow house built by Louis Gaus, the only electrician in Carlsbad in the 1920's.



Vacant parcel



A variety of architectural styles exist such as this apartment structure.



Building (right) shows the variety of scale of existing buildings.



Apartment project off of Magnolia Avenue



Example of older apartments in the neighborhood



# Planning Issues and Implications

The following questions flow from the various key issues identified through this existing conditions analysis within the City of Carlsbad. Each of these issue questions are intended to spur additional community discussion.

## Improving Walkability and Neighborhood Connection to Stores and Activities

### 1. The Envision Carlsbad Phase 1 outreach process findings emphasize the desire for enhanced walkability in the city by providing services and amenities closer to where people live, by providing more walking routes and by making existing routes safer and more appealing. How can walkability be improved for the city's neighborhoods?

Particularly in older neighborhoods such as the Village and Barrio, community members walk to services, to and from school, utilizing the grid network of streets and sidewalks. While some new neighborhoods such as Bressi Ranch are being designed from the ground up with pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers and gridded street network, how can walkability and connections to shops and services be improved for the existing neighborhoods?

Improvements to walkability could be achieved by a multi-pronged strategy that includes:

- Strategically located neighborhood commercial “nodes”. Several existing small and large shopping centers—particularly along El Camino Real—may have opportunities

to expand their footprints or alter tenants to provide local-serving businesses (e.g. groceries, pharmacies, new restaurants).

- Improving pedestrian connections. Renovation of existing shopping centers could also provide the opportunity to better connect to existing residential neighborhoods through new and more frequent pedestrian pathways and entrances. New pedestrian connections to and from surrounding neighborhoods could be explored by securing rights-of-way into neighborhoods and creating wider sidewalks and mid-block crossings.

In the residential neighborhoods nestled in hillsides, walkability is more challenging, with hilly topography, less lighting and visibility, fewer routes and longer distances to cover. In newer residential neighborhoods that are not on a gridded street network, especially those with topographic changes, enhancing walkability will be challenging, but the potential of this could be explored by extending existing pedestrian pathways to shopping centers, or connecting to other nearby pathways in neighboring residential areas or in natural areas. Nonetheless, if new neighborhood centers are developed, driving distances may be reduced even if walking does not increase.

Additionally, walkability could be enhanced at a citywide scale by installing benches and transit shelters and adding landscaping, wayfinding and pedestrian-scaled lighting. The General Plan could also consider ways to improve rail and freeway overpass areas, with lighting, sidewalk improvements and art installations. In design requirements for pedestrian-oriented

streets, the city could also consider how buildings address the street, through ample windows for display, outdoor eating areas, entryway design options and attractive signage.

## Connecting People to Services and Amenities

- 2. New higher-density developments have been constructed at various locations throughout the city, but do not always have basic shopping and services nearby. Similarly, industrial and office areas, with large daytime populations, lack basic services and amenities, such as places for lunch. How can new development be more connected to these basic needs and existing developments improved? While the Village, Barrio and coastline receive special attention in this paper, what about connectivity and activity in the rest of the city?**

The majority of Carlsbad’s employment, shopping and visitor facilities are only accessible by car, which precludes walking or bicycling to nearby services and amenities—a common small-town quality. In general, the city’s land use policies have also favored these larger, car-oriented shopping centers over smaller, neighborhood-serving commercial uses. As a result, uses tend to be in silos, wherein the Palomar Airport Road employment area has few basic shopping offerings or parks for gathering at lunchtime. City policies in recent years have purposefully distributed higher density housing throughout the community, so no one neighborhood is unduly impacted. However, this has contributed to a disconnection between service, transit, and housing. Higher density developments tend to be inhabited by families and seniors, who need good access to services, schools and health care, and also by some who are transit dependent. The issue is how this connection can best be fostered, and where new higher density housing should be located.

One strategy could be to locate new higher-density housing in areas that already have good access to amenities. In particular, new housing in the Barrio and the Village would enable more people to live closer to transit, shops and services. Additionally, opportunities for mixed-use development could be explored as new opportunities may be presented for re-use of ageing shopping centers—whether along El Camino Real or places such as Plaza Camino Real—that have transit access and greater connections to amenities. However, these would need to go hand-in-hand with streetscape improvements to enhance pedestrian safety and experience, and site planning and building design to ensure noise avoidance and insulation from traffic.

## Waterfront Activation

- 3. How can the waterfront be “activated” with uses—restaurants, stores, entertainment, visitor uses, and even new residences—that would enable Carlsbad residents to better enjoy the ocean? What is the potential for such uses? How does cohesive, small, beach community translate into physical design?**

Community members lamented the lack of beach activities and uses during Envision Carlsbad Phase 1. Although the promenade and the beach remain popular destinations, they lack adjoining waterfront activities—places where people can eat, shop and passively connect with the ocean while taking in the views of the sand, water and sunset. The opportunity sites analysis reveals potential sites for development and redevelopment—close to the Village and further south, near Poinsettia Lane and the Ponto area. Clustering new uses in some of these opportunity sites areas could bring new vibrancy and foot-traffic to the beaches. In addition, the proposed Carlsbad Boulevard realignment project and property exchange with State Parks serves as an opportunity to improve coastal access and waterfront amenities.

For example, several opportunity sites are clustered between Oak and Pine avenues along Carlsbad Boulevard. These sites are located on both sides of the street, several of which front onto the ocean or onto existing open space or parking areas with views and access to the water. Sites include several older visitor facilities as well as low intensity commercial uses that could be intensified to include a mix of active uses. In addition, the existing State-owned parking area that serves the beach could be repurposed as an outdoor plaza onto which surrounding development with active uses could front. Since these sites are only a block from the core of visitor activity along Carlsbad Village Drive, the area could be a synergistic link between the beach and Village.

The character of Carlsbad Boulevard between Walnut Avenue and Tamarack Avenue could transition to facilitate greater beach access with improved and more frequent pedestrian crossings, a planted median and pedestrian refuge, and a narrower street width to create a more intimate connection to the water. Further down Carlsbad Boulevard, just south of Poinsettia Lane, there are several vacant and underutilized opportunity sites that could provide an additional waterfront location for mixed-use development.

## Beach Access

4. **Access to the beach is often difficult to find and along narrow stairways between residences that front the beach. How can these access points be improved and where should new access points be created? What types of signage or way-finding elements might work best to “advertise” and orient visitors to the beach?**

For beach access, identification of the primary pedestrian connections and entrances to the beach could be accomplished through signage, a consistent landscaping scheme, a change in paving materials, wider sidewalks and

preservation of view corridors. Clear signage is especially important, particularly for identifying where ramps for families with children, the elderly and persons with disabilities are located. Additional access points may need to be identified as improved connectivity and facilities are provided, particularly if a new beachfront activity area is established.

Improved beach access from the Barrio neighborhood could include a pedestrian crossing at grade, under or over the rail corridor at Chestnut Avenue. Additionally, more frequent pedestrian crossings could be identified along Carlsbad Boulevard, where crossings are as infrequent as 2/3 of a mile (more than a 10-minute walk). Crossings from residential neighborhoods and existing bike and pedestrian trails should be identified and prioritized.

## Appropriate Densities and Intensities

5. **As Carlsbad looks ahead to a future where new development will result largely from reuse of existing sites rather than outward growth, issues of appropriate density and intensity will be paramount to ensure efficient use of land, compatibility between old and new development, and the ability to take advantage of locations that are proximate to transit, services and amenities. Moreover, during the visioning phase, community members advocated vigorously for preservation of open spaces. Where development is appropriate, what densities and building heights are appropriate? How can we efficiently use land, support economic sustainability and retain the small town feel and beach character of the community?**

The Community Vision made clear community members’ interest in both preserving the city’s small-town character and open spaces, while also revitalizing neighborhoods to bring new uses and vibrancy. These visions are not necessarily at odds. Considering appropriate densities and intensities for development

is one way to manage demand for new uses, while preserving open space and the existing community character. Specifically, allowing for compact development in specific locations and managing potential impacts (e.g. traffic congestion) can allow the city to meet market demand for new uses, while relieving development pressures elsewhere. The General Plan update process can explore these tradeoffs and help identify appropriate densities and intensities for locations throughout the city.

## Prioritizing Revitalization Efforts

- 6. Carlsbad is a vibrant town with much to offer. However, there are several areas that face issues of crime, deterioration, or vacancy (e.g. Car Country, Las Palmas area, and the Barrio) which could be improved to better serve existing residents, as well as attract visitors, businesses and new residents to the city. What revitalization efforts should be a focus in the short term, over the next five years? In ten years? In twenty years?**

This report explored several ways to revitalize neighborhoods. In the short-term or where funds are limited, renovations and façade improvements can beautify storefronts and repair homes, creating more vibrant places and improving structural integrity. Streetscape improvements, including improved street furniture, lighting, landscaping and pedestrian crossings can also help to revitalize commercial corridors and the streets around neighborhood commercial centers. Streetscape improvements may be completed coincidentally with development or redevelopment of sites, which may take place over longer periods of time. Adding new uses or establishing a mix of uses can attract locals and visitors alike, who may be able to accomplish a series of errands or activities within a single trip.

The City's Department of Neighborhood Services has already initiated several programs that provide incentives for neighborhood

improvement and beautification efforts. The department's mission is to engage the community, its neighborhoods, and its people in the development and implementation of programs that enhance the quality of life and sense of community. For example, the Minor Home Repair and Village Storefront Grant Improvement programs provide zero-interest loans and grants to assist homeowners and business/property owners, respectively, in funding improvements on their properties. The department also has community activity grants which can be obtained by community groups who want to implement small projects that enhance quality of life—in the past this has included art shows, festivals, neighborhood signage, and educational exhibits. The department is currently researching potential target neighborhoods and new programs, including incentives for acquisition and rehabilitation projects. The General Plan can consider strategies to better promote existing programs and recommend new programming ideas to prevent neighborhood deterioration and ensure community safety.

## Village Revitalization

- 7. What are the best strategies for revitalizing the Village? What are appropriate densities and intensities for new development that will be in keeping with the Village's small town beach character? Carlsbad already has a codified development policy for the Village in the form of the Village Master Plan. However, implementation has been inconsistent, potentially due to the difficult economic climate and tight lending market. What can the Master Plan and General Plan do to provide incentives to developers and existing property owners to invest in the community and their properties?**

The Village has evolved into an eclectic neighborhood rich with character and diversity, both in its physical landscape and in its varied activities and land uses. However, much of the

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Village's building stock is older and in need of renovation or repair, or has reached its serviceable lifetime. In addition, portions of the Village are developed at a low intensity and designed to meet the needs of a car-oriented lifestyle, not in keeping with the vibrant, active, pedestrian-oriented core that has come to define the Village experience. As the Village continues to evolve, it will be important to redevelop and strategically focus improvements in the neighborhood to best express the city's small town beach community lifestyle, take advantage of key opportunities to connect to transit and add new residents and life into downtown Carlsbad.

As identified in Chapter 2, there are a large number of opportunity sites throughout the Village, including 2.5 acres of vacant and 51 acres of underutilized land. Many of these underutilized sites are lower intensity commercial uses like auto repair and service facilities, as well as professional office and bank buildings along Carlsbad Village Drive and State and Roosevelt streets. As a result, there are many opportunities for new development in the Village, particularly for housing and mixed-use development that would provide an increased presence of both residents and activity in the neighborhood. Ideally, this new development would be focused near existing and new neighborhood-serving commercial uses and transit to ensure the Village remains walkable and is attractive to new residents and visitors. Higher density and intensity of development should be explored in order to support improved walkability, transit, and expanded services in the Village. The Village Master Plan illustrates many of these concepts and recommendations in detail, including potential bonus densities for LEED certification, affordable housing, and other amenities. Currently, residential densities vary widely in the Village, with higher densities located closer to the beach. Existing commercial and mixed-use development ranges from an FAR of 0.10 to 1.24, with much of the higher intensity in the core of the Village and near the beach. The Village Master Plan will continue to guide development in the Village following the General Plan update. The General Plan will



*State Street has a well-defined street wall and pedestrian relationship to the street with wide sidewalks, seating areas, awnings, and ample pedestrian (top and middle). Outdoor seating areas can provide activity and visual interest (bottom).*

likely document and encourage the Master Plan and its provisions, with the Master Plan being updated as necessary to ensure consistency with the General Plan.

Key areas where new residential development should be located include sites within a ¼-mile walk of the transit station, such as along State Street and Roosevelt Street north of Grand Avenue. Mixed-use development should be focused along Carlsbad Village Drive and along Carlsbad Boulevard between Christiansen Way and Pine Avenue. Intensification of these streets through catalyst projects, particularly within the core of the Village (see Figure 5-1), would provide a nexus of activity for both residents and visitors located just a short walk from transit and the beach—an ideal neighborhood in which to live, visit, work and play.

In addition to residential and mixed-use development in the Village, there are opportunities to strengthen commercial uses, many of which may not redevelop over the General Plan horizon. Commercial uses located along Carlsbad Village Drive are the most visually prominent in the Village; however, their car-oriented site design does little to create a small, beach town atmosphere. In particular, between I-5 and Roosevelt Street, Carlsbad Village Drive is characterized by large surface parking lots and buildings that are set back from the street edge. Redevelopment of existing commercial sites could establish a building-to-street relationship that fosters a more intimate, community-oriented character, where visitors and locals feel comfortable walking or biking along the street. Buildings located at the sidewalk edge with parking and driveways located away from major streets would establish a strong street wall. Trellises, arcades and other built elements could carry on the scale and presence of the street wall—particularly along existing parking lots that front the street.

The Village Master Plan and Design Manual provides guidance for design, land use, and redevelopment within the Village, and includes development standards and design guidelines

that may not need to be changed as part of the General Plan Update. However, there are opportunities to expand on key elements like public art and identity through a signage and way-finding scheme as well as an expanded public arts program. Public art in the context of an active community environment provides a sense of humor and play, and fosters an innate participation in the public realm. It helps develop an identity for an area and provides a context for interaction with one's environment and fellow visitors. Public art can be expressed in a wide range of visual and physical forms—from banners on light posts, paving and artwork on sidewalks, light displays at night, music, and sculptures, to the design and shaping of public spaces and plazas—all of which set the stage for people to gather, play, and observe. An expanded public art program in the Village could build on existing activities and events and incorporate cultural facilities, the beach, and a new waterfront area where public art could be showcased.

### Barrio Revitalization

#### 8. What are the best strategies for revitalizing the Barrio, while celebrating the neighborhood's history and character, particularly in light of difficulties in establishing plans in the past?

While there are a handful of vacant parcels, almost all sites in the Barrio have existing residential development. There has been little recent development or private investment in the area, despite considerable expenditure (nearly \$30 million) by the City in public improvements, and the presence of recent development, such as residential development at the corner of Pine Avenue and Tyler Street, just outside of the Barrio. Many buildings are also not well maintained. Some property owners have indicated that allowed densities are too low to justify new investment and development; however, some long-term residents are not in favor of increased densities.



The City's Housing Element identifies the potential for over 330 housing units over a seven year period in the Barrio; housing need is greater over the longer-term general plan horizon. The Housing Element anticipates adding the majority of this housing in the southwestern part of the Barrio through redevelopment of some existing multifamily complexes that are ageing. This area is farther away from the single-family homes, so the visual impact to the neighborhood would be minimal. There may also be some opportunities for new two- to three-story medium density infill opportunities spread out in the neighborhood. The challenge is how this growth can be leveraged to enhance neighborhood quality, character, and vitality, while ensuring that concerns of some existing residents relative to density and historic preservation are adequately addressed.

In addition to redevelopment opportunities, revitalization efforts should be focused on renovations and façade improvements as well as enhancing the physical infrastructure of the community. In particular, the Barrio will best be served by establishing and improving physical connectivity—across the railroad and the freeway. Redevelopment of large existing multi-family developments also provides the opportunity to reestablish the street grid and provide connections through development instead of cul-de-sacs and looping roadways. On some of the Barrio's wider streets, there may be opportunities to reclaim portions of the roadway for sidewalks, bulbouts, and small plazas in order to create a more pedestrian-friendly experience and encourage interaction among neighbors. Signage and streetscape improvements should also be a priority for the Barrio, particularly on key connections to the Village and neighborhood activity centers like the senior center, school, and area around Lola's.

## Improving Streetscapes and Creating Gateways

9. **The City of Carlsbad is known for its beauty, natural amenities and small town character, but this image is not always projected upon entrance to the city, particularly from I-5. Improvements to the city's streetscapes along key entrances and major streets will help reinforce Carlsbad's character and identity. Additionally, streetscape design can also symbolize a street or area as a "gateway" into the city through the use of public art, landscaping, signage, or special materials or fixtures. Where should the city focus these efforts? What streets and neighborhoods might benefit the most from streetscape improvements?**

Figure 3-1, City Structure, identifies key gateways into the city, including several on I-5, Carlsbad Boulevard, and El Camino Real. These entrances into the city are opportunities to visually connect visitors—whether they are passing through or coming to stay—with Carlsbad's presence and community identity. Signage at these entrances, as well enhanced streetscape elements like lighting, trees, and public art can create a visual imprint of the city. These elements could also be extended to specific streets that act as key thoroughfares and connections in the city, including El Camino Real, but more specifically, Carlsbad Boulevard, Carlsbad Village Drive, and Palomar Airport Road. These streets could become an experience and destinations, especially if lined with uses and development that is attractive, active, and well designed. Streetscape improvements along these streets, where a consistent design of street trees, sidewalk furnishings and paving, crosswalk treatments, lighting and signage could work together to tell a story of who and what Carlsbad is as a community and destination.

There are also opportunities throughout the city, particularly in residential areas and along east-west connections, to integrate disparate

master planned communities and neighborhoods into a cohesive whole, by establishing streetscape schemes along key connector streets and arterials. Major streets that could be improved include Cannon Road, La Costa Avenue, Poinsettia Lane, Rancho Santa Fe Road, and College Boulevard. These could create an identity for residential areas, and also provide physical benefits if designed to advance walkability and recreation with wider sidewalks, bike trails, or bike lanes.



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